

OPINIONS OF MARY



ALICE
ASHWORTH
TOWNLEY

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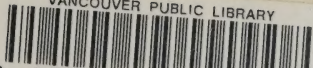
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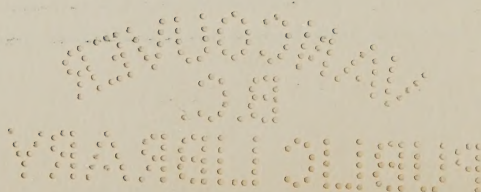
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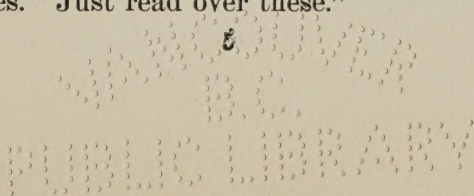
I.

ON GARDENS.

"I'M going to have a garden this year," announced Mary, importantly, the other day, as she entered my sanctum (I am a bachelor maid and a scribbler). She laid a voluminous packet of gaily colored pamphlets on my table, while she seated herself and removed her gloves. "I'm going to have a garden, and I just brought these catalogues over so that you might help me choose what seeds I'd better buy."

"Don't you think you had better buy the young plants instead of bothering with seeds," I suggested; "it's so much surer."

"Surer! Why? You mean dearer, don't you? I've been reading over these catalogues, and I find if I buy seeds I can have all sorts of things for about a quarter the money I would have to spend to buy plants. Then think how interesting it will be watching the dear little things growing, and I'll have such lovely new varieties. Just read over these."



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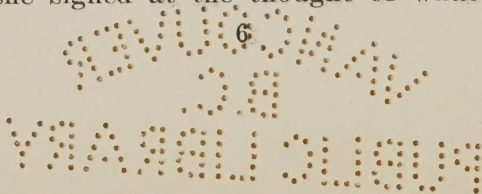
"Yes, I know; but supposing your seeds don't grow?"

"What's to prevent them growing? I've been reading all about gardening—it's the easiest thing in the world, and with proper care things always grow. Wait till I read you what one lady says about her garden. She had only a tiny bit of ground, you know, in a poor situation, too, and she grew sweet peas and mignonette that were the envy of the neighborhood, and nasturtiums and tuberous begonias that were one mass of bloom, and stocks and lovely creepers and—"

But her breath gave out before she reached the end of this wonderfully successful woman's list, and she turned on me an eloquently convincing glance and sat back for a moment to recover herself and pick out the right pamphlet to confront me with.

I was not as much impressed as she was, even after she had read me a fascinating description of what had been achieved by this flower-loving sister, and the remarkable results obtained by another from ten cents' worth of seeds, some old tin cans, and a tub filled with earth.

"And you know I have a better chance than that. There is a nice little plot in our yard, in a sunny situation; I've had it dug and raked over and it's all ready. I wish I had thought of a garden early enough to have made a hot-bed. It's no trouble at all, but it's too late now." And she sighed at the thought of what might



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have been. "However," she went on, cheering up again, "nearly all the annuals do well here in Toronto if planted in the open air. You only have to wait a little longer for them to flower. Come and tell me which ones you'd get."

So we looked through the illustrated lists, where the glowing beauty of magnificent bloom overlaid and hid the few unobtrusive leaves on the compact and shapely plants shown; where the new varieties of well-known favorites far surpassed anything ever seen before in that line; where the novelties "for the first time introduced at great cost" from far-off countries made one long to dwell in such flower-blessed lands—and we found it difficult to decide.

Mary said she didn't want an ordinary, commonplace lot of flowers, when she could just as well have nicer ones. With the wisdom born of experience and disappointments, I suggested petunias, as being showy and a pretty sure crop,—but she laughed at me. I spoke of candytuft, alyssum, marigolds,—and she intimated that I had common tastes. I ventured on zinnias,—and she scorned me. Nasturtiums and mignonette appeased her somewhat; but when I recommended poppies and scarlet runners she picked up her books and left me. She said she was not cross, but our ideas seemed so entirely at variance that perhaps we had better not discuss the matter any longer.

I hear she has planted a choice variety of

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highly recommended seeds and is looking forward triumphantly to being able to demonstrate to me—having faithfully followed the books on gardening—what an amateur gardener can produce if he or she sets to work properly.

She may prove that I don't know a thing about it, but till she does I will go on believing that I do, and—but haven't we all observed the experience of the novice who suddenly bethinks him that he will make a garden behind his house? He invests in a spade, hoe and rake, and hies to his yard, maps out the portion he intends to cultivate, and begins removing the sod. This he generally finds more laborious than he anticipated, and, unless he is unusually persevering, he quickly concludes that he has not time to spare from business just then, and engages a man to do that portion of the work. And the man being there, he lets him dig it also.

It may be that he enriches it a trifle, but the necessity for this very probably escapes his mind, and he contents himself with picking out the bits of brick, stones and other extraneous matter that appear even to him to have no nourishing properties. Then he rakes it neatly and pats it down smooth.

If it is to be a vegetable garden, from the catalogue he chooses those seeds illustrated by the most enticing pictures. Peas, whose smiling pods never could have met over the rounded loveliness of the plump and delicious contents

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displayed; beans, whose drooping abundance of pods is a marvel; radishes, guaranteed to mature in a remarkably short space of time. But no need to go over the list! He plants them. Then he sits down and dreams happily of the delicious dinners he will enjoy, and calculates the saving it will make in household expenses.

Poor man! He doesn't know that a late frost will probably nip his beans; that the pink beauty of his radishes will prove a congenial home for descendants of the harmless-looking black-fly; that his cucumber plants will be mysteriously cut off at a tender age; that green worms will infest his cabbages and cauliflowers, and that the tomato plants that gave such promise will be overtaken by the autumn frost before their burdens ripen. Neither does he realize that the cat will probably haunt his lettuce bed, the gate be left open some fine day and a stray dog devastate the premises; that he will wake some bright morning and find his neighbor's hens making merry among his treasures.

If flowers should have been his choice—and the seeds happen to come up—things are no better. The same woes wait upon them; and what straggling plants reach maturity are strangely unlike his expectations.

If he invests in roses, the leaves will disappear and the promising buds be things of the past before he realizes that hellebore is the most

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satisfying diet for their enemies; and later on his mignonette is apt to share the same fate. The flower-stalk of his lily will probably be entered in an unobtrusive manner near the ground by a grub whose "excelsior" proceedings end only when it reaches the topmost bud, and the hollowed stalk turns yellow and refuses longer to support the cluster that, to this time, has filled the owner with delusive hope. If his china asters seem coming on in a refreshingly flourishing way, likely some day the baby will elude maternal vigilance and gaily pick the buds off all of them.

And creepers—who ever knew anything more disappointing than creepers? We had one last year that the book intimated would climb up a two-storey house in one season and twine around the chimney, so luxuriant was its promised growth,—and it was to be covered with rich bloom during the whole summer. When winter overtook it it was reaching out in a listless way for the top of the porch, and the few inconspicuous blossoms that adorned it were apparently too ashamed of their meagre proportions to hold their heads up.

Then there is the dry weather that burns things up, and the wet weather that drowns them out; the winds that break them down, and the heavy rains that flatten them. Truly the gardener has much to contend with, and disappointment is often his lot.

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I have had many illusions destroyed, and amongst the rest the idea that it is very easy to have a successful garden and requires no experience. I have also come to hold an admiration and esteem for those deserving plants that may be depended upon to do their best and be some satisfaction even under adverse circumstances. (That's why I have developed an ever-growing respect and fondness for petunias, potatoes and a few such.)

When I plant flowers now I am wary of novelties, and cling to the sweet old-fashioned, hardy varieties that with rich earth and ordinary care will repay your efforts.

And I should not be surprised if Mary were to do the same—next year.

II.

SUMMER.

“ARE you warm?” I said to Mary in greeting, by way of being pleasingly original.

It was one of those singeing days to which the Canadian summer treats us—when the hot-tempered old sun had dispensed with the services of the winds and clouds and raindrops, and was attending to things himself without any meddling assistance—and doubtless taking great credit to himself (red-faced old monster!) for the way he was doing things up brown.

“Are you warm, Mary?” again inquired I, blandly (upon whose morals the devilsomeness of the day had had such an effect that I deliberately intended to stir my friend up and goad her to ill-considered remarks). “Because if you feel chilly we might go out and sit in the sun, or go through a little brisk exercise, or even touch up the kitchen fire. Would you care for a cup of hot chocolate or a little ginger wine?”

Then Mary said things that pleased me—wicked things about the temperature, violent things regarding the superfluous garments civilization compels us to wear, intentionally insulting words with reference to those contemptible persons who fancy themselves smart when they

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are only silly. Then we both felt much relieved and indulged in a friendly glass of ice-water.

"But you know it's terrible weather we're having," sighed she, as she loosened her collar and fanned herself. "It's ridiculous the stiff, tight things people have to wear. I wish we were early Greeks—then we'd have one arm bare anyway! Jack says he has sympathy with that man in somebody's book who said, when someone suggested that it was so hot they'd like to take off their clothes and sit in their skin, that for his part he wished he could take off his flesh and sit in his bones."

I admitted that the Roentgen-ray idea had a cool—if rather impracticable—sound about it.

"As for clothing," remarked I, "if you acted up to your convictions and discarded uncomfortable attire you might suffer less from—"

"Oh, yes," interrupted Mary, impatiently, "and look like what? If you think I've the strength of mind to go around wearing 'easy' boots, and a shapeless-looking business, with hardly even a belt, flopping around me, and skirts that look as if I'd been drawn through a keyhole, you may rid yourself of the idea—for I haven't! I've seen the sensible girls that get themselves up like that—dowdy-looking lot! And you know well enough I look like a scarecrow with my hair dabbed down in that flat way that suits some people—I have to curl it!" (and the emphasis on "have" dared me to a denial

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of her statement). "You surely wouldn't like me to put a bit of turned-down lace around my neck when everyone else has ruffles up to the tops of her ears, or stiff linen collars! I'd sooner choke myself to death than look like that long-necked Smith girl!"

"Well, well," said I, stemming the torrent of her eloquence, "wear what you like—only don't come grumbling to me about it."

Mary regarded me with a displeased gaze.

"Thank you, I will," said she, with stony dignity; "and what's more" (relapsing into her usual impetuosity), "I'll come to you and grumble all I like, you nasty, cross old thing!—trying to talk in that superior way and pretending you've more sense than I have!"

When we had decided that the day was warm enough without any heated argument to liven things up, and a truce had been declared between us, Mary sat back in an easy chair and was silent for some minutes.

"Do you know?" remarked she, presently, with rather plaintive intonation, "I think summer is a very disagreeable time of year. Winter is much nicer."

"That's because you are feeling the heat just now," returned I, unimpressed by this dictum. "Most people consider summer a most delightful season."

"Well, I don't. Get out, you horrid animal!"—this to an attentive fly that, refusing to be

SUMMER

snubbed, returned again and yet again to pay court to her moist brow, careless of the threatening fan she was waving. "Now, if it were winter I should not, for instance, be bothered by that persistent fly, nor be so warm."

"No," consented I, grimly, remembering with what unfair neglect our furnace treats my apartment, "you certainly would not be bothered with the heat up here."

"Then look at the list of unpleasant things that happen in summer," went on Mary, evidently determined to maintain her contention. "The season opens with the abomination of house-cleaning. As soon as the carpets are down you must begin preserving—look at my hands with cleaning strawberries!—and it's always on the very hottest days that people bring in baskets of fruit that 'must be done at once or they'll spoil before morning.' You don't have preserving to do in winter (unless it may be marmalade), when it would be really a pleasure to stand over the stove. Oh, no! it's when you're ready to die with the heat anyway that you are forced to fire up and cook and stew. Then ironing! Our girl has gone—and I wish you could see the ironing I had to do yesterday. In winter there would not have been more than enough to keep me an hour, but this is summer! Muslins and linens that wouldn't have dared show their faces in winter confronted me in long array. Starch and frills and flounces that are

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entirely the growth of the season struggled with me till I was as hot as the flatirons—kept me toiling till the day was done.”

“I suppose the season is indirectly responsible for that?”

“Of course it is.”

“But then, consider the pleasures of the summer—the boating and tennis and camping and picnics.”

“Did you ever go camping?” suddenly inquired Mary.

“Y-es,” answered I, slowly, with remembrance of one weird outing in my mind.

“And can you look me in the face and tell me you truly enjoyed it?”

“You see, we were inexperienced, and hardly knew what to take. Other people always enjoy it very much,” ended I, somewhat tamely.

“Do they, indeed? I never did! Beds that nearly break your back, mosquitoes and bugs and beetles, snakes under the floor of your tent, and spiders roosting above you. You take only heavy clothes and it’s ripping hot, or you only have light things and it turns cold enough to freeze you. Your face gets sunburnt till you could cry with the pain, and you’ve forgotten vaseline and haven’t a dab of powder amongst you. It’s always coming your turn to cook—and the little beast of a stove generally smokes—and the water has to be carried a quarter of a mile. If you leave the flap of your tent open

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at night, moths and mosquito-hawks as big as bats come buzzing about you like bees in a hive—and the tent always blows down when a good rain-storm comes.”

I laughed at Mary's feeling recital of the camper's woes.

“Sometimes such things do happen,” I admitted, “but think of the fun you have!”

“What fun? You go berry-picking and get lost, and fall off logs, and get scratched and tear your clothes, and step in a wasps' nest and are nearly stung to death, and come back without any berries—or you get up a fishing party who have no success. If you go out sailing with anyone a squall comes up and you can hardly get in. And if you happen to sit out in the moonlight half an hour with any man you really like, the chaperone is after you. There is no fun in camping. A good sleigh-ride with tin horns and a dance at the other end of it is preferable.”

Evidently Mary's camping party had not been complete. That makes all the difference in these things.

“And thunder! You are not usually waked up from peaceful slumbers in winter by a blood-curdling crash rolling around the universe. (‘How can a crash roll?’ I don't care! you know what I mean!) You don't sit up in shrieking terror to see your room a blazing horror of invading electricity—and wait in trembling

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dread for the next flash. It's in summer-time you are treated to that."

I'm rather uneasy during a thunderstorm myself, so had nothing to urge in its favor, except a faint suggestion about it "clearing the atmosphere."

"I wish it might be cleared with a little less disturbance, though I'm not like a clergyman I heard about the other day. He left the place where he was boarding because it was too noisy—the children disturbed him at his devotions. Now, I assure you, some of the very best prayers I've ever said went up during a thunderclap. It takes a lot to disturb me at my devotions sometimes"—and Mary gave me a comical smile—"in fact, I find the louder the thunder the more fervently I can pray."

It is possible that others may resemble Mary in this particular.

"Consider all the evils flesh is heir to in the heated term that we never think of when the weather is cold. Who ever heard of sunstroke, or hay fever, or prickly heat, or teething babies in winter-time?"

I demurred slightly at this. "Babies, you know," remonstrated I—"I fancy their teeth come—like themselves—without regard to the time of year."

"Perhaps," granted Mary. "But if they do you hear nothing about it. The poor youngsters don't advertise the fact by crying all day and

SUMMER

all night, and keeping the doctors and undertakers busy—like they do in hot weather. Listen to that!” and she nodded at me triumphantly as the next-door infant began to wail in plaintive disapproval of the miseries of life.

Mary rose and began to pin on her hat preparatory to going.

“Look at the freckles on my nose,” said she, suddenly turning to me. “That’s the beaming, beautiful summer sun for you! It will take me till Christmas to get my complexion into shape!—Well, good-bye. Our iceman didn’t come to-day, and I suppose the milk will be sour and the butter liquid—and I forgot to put the screen in the kitchen window, and the whole house will be swarming with flies, no doubt. Oh, I hate summer!”

On a cooler day Mary may take a happier view of life.

III.

ON ELUDING RESPONSIBILITY.

IF you want to have what you do for people really appreciated, don't do too much. I've been thinking this thing out and gathering data, and talking to Mary on the subject, and have reluctantly accepted the obtrusive conclusion that the people who are most self-sacrificing and unselfish receive far less praise and gratitude than those who rarely indulge in the pleasure of doing anything for their neighbors.

From those who are always considerate we are apt to take kindness and attention as a right, while, received from people from whom it is not expected, we are quite overcome.

In nearly every family you find some member of whom nothing is expected. It may be a careless and inattentive son, upon whom his mother thankfully waits. He must not be expected to take his sisters anywhere, because a young man hates to be trammelled. No one dreams of his staying at home to help entertain heavy guests, or taking his mother home from church, or doing anything in a social way that does not commend itself to him as being pleasant and agreeable. His linen must be immaculate, his possessions

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unborrowed by the rest of the family, and domestic arrangements made to fit in as nearly as may be with his ideas on the subject. No one expects him to light the furnace, or bring up coal, or clean away the snow. I don't say he refuses to do it—but no one seems to think it possible he might be called upon. Then some day, if he takes his mother out for a drive or asks his sisters to go to the theatre (when his best girl has disappointed him, and he has tickets), they nearly weep with delight and gratitude, and say to one another, "Such a good fellow after all! So kind and thoughtful!"

As a rule the family are all very fond and proud of this representative, and grateful to be allowed to contribute to his happiness.

Or it may be a pretty daughter who is absolved by mutual consent from all exertion on behalf of others. She may not have been very strong in her childhood; she may be incompetent, or she may be the beauty. She is not fond of cooking, and does not care for plain sewing. Fresh air is good for her. So her mother or sisters make her clothes and help her dress her hair, and let her sleep late in the mornings and accept every invitation that comes her way; and think not to suggest that she should wash the dishes or stay at home and get the dinner on Sunday morning.

No one expects her to assume any responsibility or let the rest of the family play her

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pieces of music or borrow her bracelets. She does not always need to be cranky about it—they somehow don't seem to presume upon her good nature. There appears to be an understanding that she is not to sit up at night if anyone is sick, or to have to read to her grandmother, or do without a new hat—no one expects it of her. If she makes an eatable cake or trims a bonnet for her mother, the whole family are lost in admiration of her cleverness (though any one of her sisters does much more without notice). It is "See this lovely cake, father; Maude made it! Isn't she getting a fine cook?" "Thank you, my dear, for trimming my bonnet so beautifully; they couldn't have done it better at Murray's!" If she gives her little sister a ribbon she doesn't need, the child is as pleased as Punch—and should she offer to read to her grandmother, the old lady is as grateful as if she had no right to expect such an attention every day of her life.

So it seems to me that if you accustom surrounding people to the idea that you must be considered by them, and that they need not depend upon you in return, you get more praise and glory when you do exert yourself for their benefit than if you were always at it.

If you are known to be amiable and unselfish, people take it as a matter of course that you should put yourself aside. They take it for granted that you do hard work and unpleasant

ON ELUDING RESPONSIBILITY

things because—in some mysterious way—they come easy to you or you like it; and if you should desire a little pleasure yourself or give up relieving them of their duties, they possibly let you know what they think of such an unreasonable and utterly selfish creature. If you want appreciation, be advised, and don't make your good offices too much of a certainty.

I was in a house the other day where a fond mother who was dressing her child displayed to me an ugly and badly-made little pinafore. "This," she told me, as she put it on, "was made by Aunt May; wasn't it good of her? She so seldom does anything of that kind that I feel quite complimented—it's awfully good of her!" Nearly every other garment on the child—and dozens more like them—had been fashioned by another relative who was sitting by, but nothing was said of them. Aunt Jessie was "fond of sewing" and "always did things" for one, so why make any remark about it?

There are so many ways of eluding work or responsibility, and nearly always somebody will turn up to assume the burden if you don't. You can do the "standing from under" act quite gracefully, and in such a way that very few will recognize it. It is not in the least necessary to make a fuss or be unpleasant over it—there are many admirable plans in daily use.

One good way—in the family circle anyhow—is to be "perfectly willing" but rather stupid—

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find a difficulty in understanding the mechanism and working of quite ordinary things—how pipes are put up and clocks wound, and doors fastened, and the lawn-mower oiled, and the furnace regulated. If you are very stupid about learning (you can stop the clock a couple of times, put the fire out by opening wrong dampers, and let them find the back door unlocked a few mornings), and cause enough difficulty and annoyance, they will give up trying to teach you and do it themselves.

Then, be forgetful. With the best intentions in the world, suffer from lapse of memory. If you are young, and your mother bids you mind the baby, "And be sure not to let him get into mischief or dirty himself," become interested in something else and allow him to play in all the puddles and wander out into the roadway and get knocked down (you can see that he does not absolutely get killed). Let him pull up all the flowers in the garden and give his new hat to the puppy to tear to pieces. You can be awfully sorry—but you "forgot!"

The same with messages. Play on the road, or lose the money, or bring home the wrong thing. You may get a few whippings, but if you persevere they will stop bothering you, and some of your more dependable brothers or sisters will be pressed into service.

A poor memory is a fine thing for a married man, too. If he persistently neglects to order

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things, buys ridiculous articles she doesn't want—pretending he thought that was what she told him—invariably loses all the samples she gives him, and mislays every parcel entrusted to his charge, his wife will cease to depend upon him and attend to things herself. I know it's hard to consciously go home to a hurriedly procured beefsteak because you must swear you forgot the lamb and green peas she told you to order—but, like the whippings, it's worth it, securing, as it does later, your emancipation from domestic care. As a rule, if you do everything badly enough, and always make a point of forgetting what you were told, or getting the directions hopelessly mixed, you may with impunity politely offer your services without the dread of having your assistance accepted. This makes it very comfortable for you, shows a pleasing spirit of willingness on your part, and yet prevents your being imposed upon. The impression is given that if you only knew how to help you would labor vastly, but somehow you confess you are not much good at that sort of thing. It's a splendid idea to find most things very difficult to learn. If you give enough trouble and destroy a good deal of material—always perfectly willing, but a little awkward—people will give up trying to teach you and do it themselves as the least evil.

Discreetly doled out praise—especially if you are not commonly very lavish of that commodity

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—is an excellent means to induce others to relieve you of disagreeable tasks—particularly if the person you wish to work upon be rather young and impressionable. There are always some ridiculously willing creatures in the world ready and glad to wear their fingers to the bone for a word of commendation or appreciation. Praise them. They might as well be working for you as for anyone else. Thank them sweetly. Tell them you really don't know what you should have done without their help. Be amazed at their dexterity and apparent ease of accomplishment. As likely as not they will generously volunteer to do the whole thing for you, and feel quite repaid by your thanks and approbation. And these incomprehensible people rarely find out that they are being imposed upon—one who understands how to manage it can get an immense amount of exertion out of them.

Oh, there are many ways of shirking your fair share!—if you care to go in for doing that sort of thing.

IV.

THE BABY.

THERE is a certain baby of my acquaintance who has not yet acquired the art of making himself intelligible to ordinary people. By some unusual dispensation—it matters not how—I am enabled to hold converse with him, and I find some of his ideas of much interest and originality. He explains many things that have often puzzled me in the conduct of his infantile *confrères*.

For instance, he was telling me the other day some of the reasons why babies cry. The fact that they do at times indulge in this diversion is widely recognized, and at times slightly resented—by undomesticated young men, uninterested persons whose sleep is wantonly disturbed, devoted parents whose every faculty has been exercised to pacify the weeper, and others. An impression has even gained ground that other people's babies sometimes cry simply for exercise, or because they are spoiled. (People's own offspring, it is well known, never, never even whimper, unless they are sick, poor little things, or hurt.)

The baby went into particulars with me regarding this matter. "You must remember,"

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said he, "what crying is to us. It is almost the only way we have in which to express our feelings. Grown-up people have a language containing thousands of words, and are capable of giving expression to every gradation of thought and feeling; of conveying their meaning in fitting and exact terms. Not so with us. We have only two words at our command, 'goo' and 'waw'; and 'goo,' with its various declensions, is very limited in its application, being merely indicative of a perfect contentment; so consider what a large ground 'waw' has of necessity to cover. Fancy the inconvenience of being restricted to two words! How would you like it?"

I confessed that such a remarkably terse vocabulary might present difficulties in expressing one's self with fine distinction. "But," asked I, somewhat puzzled, "if 'goo' only signifies happiness and contentment, what, then, is the meaning of 'waw'?"

"'Waw,'" replied he, solemnly, "or 'ou-aw,' or 'waugh,' as some writers have it (the spelling is immaterial), means everything else. So you see at once the reason we use it so often. It is not by any means the expression of pain or sorrow only. There are so many things one wishes to mention besides the fact that one is hungry, or being inadvertently used for a pincushion. If grown-ups were not so stupid they would save themselves a lot of trouble, and us an immensity of annoyance.

THE BABY

They never seem to know what you want done. Now, the other day when I woke up my mouth was hot, and I thought I'd like a sip of nice cool water, so after lying there a few minutes I gently asked for it. Somebody whispered, 'The baby's waking! Try and get him off again.' And nurse came and began to jiggle the cradle and buzz at me, 'Shew-ew-ew,' in such a foolish way it really would have made me laugh if I hadn't been so provoked with her. I went on saying 'waw' louder, and she took me up and began carrying me about. I generally like being carried, but this time it was not what I wanted, so I kept on begging for a drink.

" 'He can't be hungry, for it's not half an hour since he was fed—perhaps there's a pin pricking him,' they said. So they undressed me—my, I hate to be bothered with my clothes being put off or on!—and poked me all over, and thought I might have colic, and turned me over on my stomach, like a turtle, and thumped me on the back, and tried to make me take some nasty-smelling stuff out of a teaspoon—and it was quite twenty minutes before they had sense to give me a mouthful of water. You see, if I had been able to say clearly, 'Stop all this nonsense, you great goose, I want a drop of water,' it would have simplified matters, for, to do them justice, they do try to please me. But it's very provoking when, even by reiterating your request in all sorts of intonations, you can't make people

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understand—and no wonder we get a bit cross now and then, and possibly shout a trifle louder than is absolutely needful in order to be heard. You'd yell yourself if it was the only way you had to attract attention."

I admitted that perhaps I would.

"I have known babies of a mischievous disposition and warped moral intellect to cry just for the pleasure to be derived from witnessing the excitement caused by their conduct. One friend of mine used to stiffen himself out and shriek until the doctor was summoned from two miles off; and invariably smiled up into the medical man's face serenely, and greeted him with 'Goo, goo,' when he arrived in hot haste. They got into a way of administering castoria and sticking him into a hot bath presently, instead of sending for the doctor, so he had to give that up; but he tells me he had lots of fun out of it. I very rarely do a thing like that. I don't think it's right. But it is not well to be too good; they are apt to impose upon you. Sometimes, if you feel a little dull, and don't quite know what you want, it's advisable to make a slight commotion. They may think of something pleasant to do for you that will be a change, and more interesting than just lying there, if you call out 'Waw, waw, waw,' and hold your breath as long as you can, when they'd take no notice of you at all if you lay in your cradle and said 'Goo.'"

THE BABY

What wisdom that child will have when he grows up!

"Then I often cry because I really am uncomfortable or I don't like what they are doing to me. For instance, they give me a bath every morning. I rather like it while I'm in the water; but when they take me out they dry me so slowly, and the wind blows on me, and I'm cold. Of course I say 'Waw, waw, hurry up, can't you!' and then they complain, 'Dear me, he's crying again!' Then it is such a nuisance having your arms stuck into clothes, and being turned over and back again. Every baby hates it—that's why we cry when they are dressing us. If grown-ups were half smart they would invent some kind of clothes that hadn't any arm-holes or sleeves, and didn't require a person to be turned over twenty times to get them fastened. And can you tell me why they roll us up so tight? When I am dressed, after my bath, the first thing they put on me is a strip of flannel, wound round me as tight as the wrapper on a cheese—and on an empty stomach, too, mind you. Then I take a hearty meal when I'm dressed, and how do you think I feel? Comfortable, eh? Plenty of breathing room! And they wonder, when I ask them to loosen it, 'What in the world is the matter with the child now? He's had his bath and been fed, and he might go to sleep contentedly.' I wish they felt like I do. If you ever have an opportunity," said

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he, earnestly, "I beg of you to remonstrate with them regarding this matter."

"By the way," inquired I, "was it you I heard crying last night about two o'clock? What was the trouble then?"

"Oh, well," replied he, with a slightly shame-faced look, "you see I woke up and was fed. I didn't happen to go to sleep again at once, and it struck me I'd like to have the gas lit—it's nasty in the dark—so I said 'Waw, waw,' a few times—that meant, 'Please light the gas.' I couldn't help it, could I, that my mother got up and began to rock me and carry me around, and my father went downstairs to get me a drink, and they thought I was sick and telephoned for the doctor? Why didn't they light the gas for me? that was what I wanted."

"But you cried a good while after the gas was lit," I reminded him. "What was that for?"

He paused meditatively a moment before telling me with a comical little smile, "I hardly remember. Perhaps I was apologizing to them for giving so much trouble. I am often so dreadfully misunderstood."

And with a resigned little sigh and an air of dismissing the subject, he put one tiny dimpled finger into his pink perfection of a mouth and peacefully settled down for a nap.

V.

THE BARBER.

"I'VE been thinking you ought to write on barber shops," said Mary.

"Barber shops!" echoed I, somewhat aghast, "I really don't think I know much about barber shops."

"Oh, well," returned she, with fine scorn, "if you're going to restrict yourself to writing only on the things you know anything about, why—" and the air of hopeless disgust with which she finished her sentence clearly intimated that she certainly despaired of me as ever producing much. (I must be very careful that Mary and the editor never meet. She is so outspoken, and he might fancy she knew what she was talking about—which she doesn't, she doesn't, she doesn't!)

"Perhaps I know a good deal more than you give me credit for," I observed with proper spirit.

"But of all things, how anyone should expect me to be fully informed regarding hair-cuts and shaving—it's unreasonable, that's what it is!"

"Not a bit of it!" quickly denied the scornful one. "Anyone ought to know all about barber shops. There's nothing hidden. I'm sure they're as open as the day—that's what I have

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against them! Men are such strange creatures. To think of any cultivated man having so little proper feeling or delicacy as to let himself be all tied up in white rags, like a baby going to feed or something of that kind, and stuck on a chair in a plate-glass window in full view of all the street, while another man smears his foolish face all over with soapsuds, or snips away at his hair! Why do you suppose they submit to it?"

I argued weakly that it seemed to be the custom in this country, and nobody thought anything of it apparently.

"Well, then, I do. I think it's horrid. Custom indeed!" commented Mary with irritation. "Custom! You wouldn't get a woman to sit in a hairdresser's front window to have her bangs curled; she'd have too much self-respect—besides, she knows she'd look too ugly; even the wax ones insist upon having their toilet completed before they are put on exhibition. But a man takes off his collar and perhaps his coat and his vest, and without a demur complacently spreads himself out to be operated upon in the eyes of all beholders. Ridiculous object! Talk about our modern civilization, I call such doings a relic of barbarism."

Truly a man does not appear at his best when he is being shaved. He may shave himself and retain some remnant of manly dignity, but when he hopelessly lies back and allows someone to

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hold him by the nose and turn and twist his face as recommends itself to this somebody's judgment and convenience, he does not present an appearance to which it is worth while attracting the attention of the general public. If they'd only rig him up a little more artistically, even. I have an eye for the artistic, and it seems to me that winding-sheet effects might be improved on—the drapery conformed to more graceful lines. A fig for utility when your best girl is liable to pass at any moment and see you posed! The effect is what should be most considered when such prominence is yours. Have them catch the drapery up gracefully on one shoulder, and let it hang in artistic folds and loopings elsewhere—never mind if a few hairs go down your back, let the consciousness that you are looking as pretty as a picture sustain you.

They tell me there are some less prominent chairs in every establishment where rather more timid and retiring creatures who shrink from the full glare of publicity may be relieved of their undesirable hirsuteness. But I notice there is always a chair in the front, and nearly always a passive and abject-looking man in the chair, and very rarely indeed the pretence of a curtain on the window. As Mary says, it is difficult to understand how a man can reconcile himself to being openly displayed at such a disadvantage. It is, no doubt, right and proper

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that he should be shaved—especially if his chin is well-shaped—and equally desirable (unless he belongs to a football team, plays the piano, or writes poetry) that his hair should be cut now and again. But why have the interesting performance given on the doorstep, as it were, for the amusement of the small boys and lady friends? One understands that light is needed to prevent the awkwardness of occasionally losing more of his anatomy than he gave the operator instructions to remove. There's just as good light on the second storey, and more on the third, and less likelihood of the tonsorial artist having his attention distracted, snipping bits out of his patrons' ears, and perilling their jugular veins with his razor, by reason of interesting occurrences on the street.

Somebody who knows all about it tells me that a barber who was so mistaken as to hide his light under a bushel by retiring to a room where a man might be shaved privately and decently, without taking all the passers-by into his confidence, would obtain next to no custom. Men wouldn't be bothered seeking him out. The barber evidently is a business man who must have his wares displayed in his window to be successful. There are creatures of imitation. It is possible that if John Smith in passing along the street were not inspired by the example of Tom Jones, who is being made beautiful, he might let his hair grow down to his

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heels and never think of having his beard trimmed.

There is no disgrace in having this part of one's toilet attended to under the auspices of the public, it is merely a matter of taste. For my part, I have rather an admiration for the frank disregard for appearances evinced by masculine humanity. It shows so much freedom from petty affectation and over-sensitiveness. Superior creature! What cares he though he awakens amusement and derision in such minds as Mary's? Calmly and unconcernedly he sits there—in the light of day or brilliance of electricity by night—and yields himself up to the ministrations of an individual in a white jacket, who capers around him with alarming instruments, and clips and snips at him, and lathers and scrapes him, and bay-rums and shampoos him—or runs over his head with an electric rolling-pin business, or applies the soothing hot towel to his throbbing brow. One does not have to go poking around to gather information regarding "shaving parlors" in Canadian cities. As Mary says, it is forced upon you.

VI.

THE HOUSEHOLDER.

"I HEAR you're trying to sell your house. How's that?" inquired the stout man of an acquaintance he found waiting for an Avenue Road car the other day. "I thought you said when you bought that you had at last found a home that suited you in every particular, and that you never intended to move again while you lived."

"So I did, Jones, and it's hard luck to have to turn out once more. When I bought a house I thought my troubles were over; but bless you! they'd only begun," responded the man with a parcel, gloomily. "I've spent more money on repairs and improvements than you could count—never done. It's so far out my wife can't keep a maid. We thought it would be so nice and quiet; and here we have a family of seven roaring children come to the house beside us, and they've run the trolley booming past our door. The man across the street has built out a shop window on the front of his house and sells groceries, and they're going to keep a livery stable around the corner. We thought the property would increase in value, but—" and an expressive gesture finished the sentence.

I couldn't hear all the annoyances and disap-

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pointments he poured into his friend's ear during the next five minutes because of a couple of passing wagons and the remarks which the lady with two children found necessary to make to them; but as he jumped on board, his parting counsel was, "No, take my advice, and don't you buy."

To have a house of his own, a home secure from the intruding visits of the landlord, is the ambition of many a man who pays rent for his present habitation, grumbles at its shortcomings and speaks feelingly of the unreasonable reluctance to repair or improve the property displayed by its niggardly owner. The supposition always is that the landlord is a grasping person of ample means, only prevented from complying with the moderate requests of a long-suffering tenant by despicable feelings of sordid meanness and an utter disregard of said tenant's comfort.

It is possible that there may be much to say on the subject from the landlord's point of view; that experience of the strange ways and doings of promising tenants for whom things have been newly swept and garnished, and at whose blighting touch windows have broken, door handles fallen away, paint erased itself, plaster lost its grip, and the very paper withered from the walls, may have blunted his sympathy. However that may be, we didn't set out to discuss the matter from his standpoint, but from that of the man who wants a house to live in and is convinced

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that the only satisfactory arrangement is to be his own landlord.

“Look you,” says he, “here am I paying out good money every month—comes to far more at the end of the year than the interest on the money invested in such a house would be—and the house doesn’t suit me. The owner won’t do a single thing for me, and I’m sure I’m not going to lay out money on another man’s property! If it were my own, now, I’d run up a partition here, and take down a door there, and redecorate the lower storey. But what’s the sense of doing anything to a rented house? If the situation didn’t suit me I’d leave it to-morrow. It really wouldn’t take much to fix it up in good shape. If he’d sell it cheap it might pay me to buy.” So he sits down and goes into close and elaborate calculations of what the cost of the repairs and alterations necessary would amount to, and perhaps comes to the conclusion to make an offer for the property—which he presently acquires and quickly begins to set in order.

But did he calculate that five hundred dollars would be amply sufficient to cover the expense of remodelling? Strange how things mount up! By the time he has put in a new furnace and cemented the cellar floor, pulled down a few partitions and put a new window over the staircase, had the plumbing overhauled and a proper bathroom fitted up, and entertained the painters and paperhangers for a couple of weeks, his

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five hundred is but a memory—the verandah has yet to be built and the roof needs repairing. An old house has almost unlimited possibilities for engulfing cash.

Or perhaps the man is wise, and, knowing the insatiability of an ancient habitation when it once begins to absorb “improvements,” avoids the hungry monster and fixes his choice upon a perfectly new dwelling, fresh from the contractor’s hands. It is replete with every modern convenience, there has not been time for any portion of it to fall into decay, nothing can possibly have been defaced by former occupants—everything is complete and up-to-date. Nothing will require to be laid out on it for years to come, and with a pleasant premonition of the comfort and satisfaction he is at last to enjoy, he contentedly moves in.

Poor man! He will learn much of the wily ways of builders within the next few months. The contractor is often a man to whom the Prayer-book specially applies—he has left undone many things that he should have attended to, and done what might well have remained untouched. Surprises wait upon the unexpected householder. Deficiencies which his unsuspecting eyes had passed over when buying loom up in their full proportions. He will probably find that shutters are lacking on amazingly sunny windows, that the first rainstorm will as likely as not flood his cellar because the founda-

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tions have not been properly banked up yet, that the kitchen chimney smokes and will require a tin thing with a cap on it to be erected thereon before it deigns to accomplish its destined purpose. The furnace likely will be too small to heat the house, the grate may possibly be missing from the drawing-room fireplace, and the necessity for coal-bins and such like almost certainly overlooked. Presently, when things begin to get nice and dry, the boards in the woodwork will drift away from one another, and the fair plastered walls, corrupted by the evil example, will develop long and gaping fissures athwart their smooth surfaces. The doors and windows will coyly shrink from their encircling frames, and storm doors and double windows will be part of his first winter's expense. He will be fortunate if the waste pipe and sewer are properly joined and he doesn't have to get his drains inquired into before six months are over. Oh, the troubles of the man who buys a ready-made house are many!

Then there is the still wiser man who builds. None of your quickly run up shells for him! He knows what he wants and is determined to have it. He pores over plans and specifications with an architect, whose suggestions he modifies to suit his own ideas, and having bought a desirable lot in a part of the city that is sure to increase in value, erects his house and is—satisfied? Well, not always.

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To begin with, it costs about twice as much as he anticipated, the appearance is apt to be very different from his expectations, and his wife complains that the internal arrangements are not convenient. The more he thinks of it the more clearly he sees the mistakes he has made, now that it is too late to rectify them. Then someone builds on the vacant lot beside him, making his nice light dining-room dark as a hole. A public school is put up near by, and all the children of the neighborhood run yelling past his door four times a day. The tide of fashion rolls away from him, and perhaps a butcher shop is opened across the way. There he is, burdened with a property he can't sell for half it cost him—so he holds it and lives on amidst uncongenial surroundings.

After all, there are worse things than occupying a rented house—always provided you have money enough to pay the rent comfortably. Why assume responsibilities and worries? Let the other man do that!

Landlords, as a class, are more accommodating than they used to be. Select a house as near your ideal in proportions and position as may be, and make the best of it. Perfect satisfaction is not for this world, and there are compensations in being a tenant. When your wife tells you that she thinks the paper on the parlors is getting soiled and the ceilings are disgraceful, you are not forced to elude her remarks or,

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moved by motives of economy, deny the evidence of your senses. You can blandly assent, "Yes, my dear, it does look shabby. We must get the landlord to do the rooms up nicely for us." If the roof leaks or the plumbing is out of order, you can insist upon having it attended to "at once," and the plumber's ample bill depletes not your bank account. If the children scratch the paint or hammer tacks into the window ledges, it doesn't worry you. And what care you for taxes? Should the landlord evince a reluctance to comply with your requests, a threat to leave, delivered at a wisely chosen time of year when he might find difficulty in securing another tenant, will nearly always bring him to time. And should he retaliate by meanly raising the rent when he has the opportunity, you can always leave when it suits you. A rented house has its good points.

VII.

AS OTHERS SEE US.

"DEAR me, how badly some people let their children behave," remarked the young mother. "I was spending the day with Mrs. Stanford, and really I don't know what I should do if my Freddie were such a young terror as that youngster of hers. He keeps her on the go the whole time."

"Does he?" said the listener, with a lively recollection of "my Freddie's" indefatigable movements. "How old is he?"

"Nearly three years."

"Had you your little boy with you when you went to see her?"

"Yes; I must tell you about it. You know she has often asked me to go there for the day and take Freddie. So yesterday I dressed him up in that new frock I made for him (you know the one I mean, with all the tucking on it, and that lovely fine embroidery that Tom's mother sent from New York), and we set out.

"He just looked sweet with his little muslin hat on those golden curls of his, and I was glad he looked so nice, for they all have an idea that child of hers is a perfect beauty. I never cared for such big eyes—do you? And I don't like to

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say it, but really that straight, dark hair of his and his little brown face make him look like a young Indian.

"I could see she was surprised to find how much Freddie had grown and how pretty he was, but she only asked me if he was 'as fretful as he used to be.' The idea! He did cry a good deal when he was getting his first teeth—any baby will; but you couldn't find a better child anywhere now, if I say it myself. However, I only said, 'Oh, no, he was hardly any trouble,' and asked her if she noticed how like his grandmother her boy was growing. You know all the father's people are plain, and the grandmother is a perfectly hideous old woman; so I think I got even with her. She said, kind of coolly, that she hadn't noticed the resemblance; most people considered the child the image of herself. I said, 'Oh, did they?'

"Then we tried to get the children to make friends. But do you think Willie would? Not he. He hung round his mother's skirts and cried if you looked at him. Of course, the house being strange to Freddie, he was naturally shy and didn't want to stay. He bothered me to take him home, and cried a good deal, and wouldn't have anything to do with her child. But I didn't take any notice of him, just let him cry it out, and he soon got over it and began to play about as good as gold.

"That Willie of hers is one of the most selfish,

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cross children you ever saw. He doesn't mind a word she says to him, and she lets him have anything he cries for. He wouldn't let Freddie play with his little cart; and of course the poor child has been used to having his own way at home, being the only one, you know, and I don't blame him for knocking the other youngster down—a child doesn't understand—and of course he wanted anything he saw that took his fancy. What child wouldn't?

“I was sorry, though, about the china vase Freddie broke. It was on a little table, with flowers in it. I told him half a dozen times not to touch it, and just when my back was turned he pulled it over on himself. Poor little fellow, he was so frightened, and soaked to the skin with the water. I hadn't the heart to touch him. Her carpet is light, but perhaps it won't be stained much. People should put things like that out of a child's reach, don't you think?

“I didn't like to offend her by leaving too early, but I was really glad to say good-bye when the time came. Freddy was getting sleepy, poor child, and wouldn't walk to the cars, so I had to carry him. And when we came to our street I'd an awful time getting him home. He lay down on the sidewalk and wouldn't either walk or let me carry him—the poor darling was just worn out, and so was I.”

I'm thinking it might be interesting to hear the other mother's version of the day, and her

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remarks anent "darling Freddie's" training and behavior.

My caller's account of the day rather reminded me of the unsatisfactory visit of which I heard a story given Mary the other evening by our acquaintance, Mrs. Tawker.

"If everybody was as egotistical as some people," remarked that lady, sententiously, as she sat down with a dissatisfied air, "it would be a funny world."

"No doubt it would," agreed Mary; "but what are you thinking of just now?"

"Well, I've been to see Mrs. Samy—ran in to tell her what a time I had getting my teeth done, and let her know what a handsome new carpet John is letting me get for my bedroom. But I might as well have stayed at home. She talked so much about her own affairs I could hardly get a word in edgewise."

"Wasn't she surprised at your having the courage to get those three teeth out?"

"Oh, she said it was brave of me," admitted Mrs. Tawker, grudgingly, "and immediately began to tell me a long tale of how she suffered when she had hers extracted, and how many times she took gas, and what the dentist said, and what everybody else said, until I was tired listening to her. I don't believe her teeth were any worse than anyone else's, if she did stay in bed for a week afterwards. Besides, what did I want to hear about it? Why, I hardly had a

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chance to tell her how I fainted afterwards and they had to bring me home in a cab. She would keep talking on of how dreadfully she suffered with hers—as if I cared. She certainly is a most unsympathetic woman,” and Mrs. Tawker fanned herself in aggrieved silence for a few minutes.

“Then she didn’t seem at all surprised that I was getting a new carpet so soon again, hardly even asked me what color it was. She might have had the politeness to talk about it for five minutes or so, don’t you think? She’s having her dining-room decorated, and of course I had to go out and admire it. Ours, in my estimation, is ever so much handsomer, but she thinks hers is going to be lovely. It’s astonishing how satisfied she is with her own things! She told me about her husband and her children and her servants; of how her cook broke a vegetable dish and the dressmaker spoiled her black silk. Isn’t it disgusting when a person is so wrapped up in herself and her own doings? Hardly a word did she say about my affairs, after just asking if we were all well. I think it’s exceedingly bad taste to force one to listen to things they don’t want to be bothered with, don’t you? There’s one thing, though—it just went in at one ear and out at the other so far as I was concerned. What difference does it make to me if her cook breaks the whole dinner set? And I can’t help it if her husband’s liver does

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trouble him. I'm a good deal more interested in whether I'll ever get back those shirts of John's that were lost by the laundryman last week.

"I stayed over an hour, but it was the same all the time—talk, talk, talk! I declare I could hardly get an opportunity to tell her how Jane went off and left me in the lurch, or about John hurting his foot, or how disappointed I was in that silk blouse I had made. And I could see she was paying very little attention when I went into full particulars about how impertinent my butcher was when I sent back that roast for being short in weight. She's one of those self-centred kind of people that don't want to listen to or sympathize with others. Oh, no! She's only interested in what concerns herself and her own people; and she'd far rather talk than listen. I call it downright egotism and selfishness. It really amazes me that she doesn't see it in herself and try to get over it. But people are so blind to their own shortcomings!"

And Mary heartily agreed that unfortunately they are!

VIII.

THE SMALL BOY.

THE small boy had been told to mow the lawn, I gathered, and rather resented the imposition. He came and sat down beside me in the hammock when it was half done, took off his hat to fan himself, and moodily regarded the lawn-mower.

"What an invention that is!" said I, cheerfully, by way of starting a pleasant conversation that might take his mind off his woes.

The effect was not quite what I anticipated.

"Invention! It's one of those inventions we could do very well without!" returned he, in an outraged voice. "Fathers are always talking of how much less boys have to do nowadays than when they were young. But when my father was young he didn't have to cut the grass forty times a year with this carpet-sweeper thing. Not him! When it got very long a man came and cut it with a scythe. And maybe pa had to rake the hay off two or three times a summer. I believe it was a better way, too."

"But don't you think the sod looks nicer than it could have done in those days?"

"Oh, perhaps it does. But that don't do me any good. The grass just keeps me busy. When I ain't cutting it they're making me water it, so

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as it will grow quick again." And he regarded the green and vigorous-looking growth with a dissatisfied gaze.

"This watering is another thing boys never had to do when father was young. He didn't have a great long sea-serpent of a hose to take out every evening just when he wanted to go and play with the boys. 'And give it a thorough watering, now, Charlie, there's a good boy. It'll take an hour to do it properly.' I ain't a good boy, and I'm going to bust that old hose some day, and run the mower over stones and chips, and bang it against the fence till the knives are so dinted they won't cut any more."

His revengeful intentions were delivered in such a determined way that I tremble for the fate of these useful implements.

"They used to trust in Providence for rain," he went on, "and rain ought to be good enough for us now. I suppose I'll have to go and finish that miserable grass. Mother's at the window, and it'll be, 'Charlie, haven't you got that done yet?' if I don't keep on. Boys are just driven nowadays!"

And he ran the machine up and down the remaining stretch of sward with a vigor that would have been most commendable had it been born of a love for work.

"Father talks away of how he used to have to bring in the wood and attend to the cow," he resumed after a few turns. "What's a little

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wood? Did he ever carry coal? And I believe I'd like to attend to a cow. Driving her home from pasture in summer would be fun, anyway. Did father ever have to take ashes out of a blooming furnace, or sift cinders?"

I had to admit that possibly a furnace did not form part of his parent's youth, as he lived on a farm.

"Well, he needn't blow away about carrying in wood the way he does, either," he continued in an injured tone; "you'd think to hear him talk that he and his brothers sawed and chopped whole forests—I really don't believe it! And their father must have been an old villain, the way he made them get up in the morning before daylight and wash in icy water, and do a day's work before school-time.

"They had porridge every morning for breakfast, and they used to eat it thankfully—thankfully, mind you! Yah!" cried this unbelieving boy, "I'm tired of hearing about what my father's family were fed on, and how they ate gratefully and never grumbled, and when their father scolded them, never, never spoke back, nor dreamed of disobeying him. Oh, I'm awful tired of it! and what's more, I don't believe they did eat what they didn't like any more than we do. I know there's lots of things my father won't eat now, and he complains loud enough when mother has meat-pie and rice-pudding and things—and then he tells us, when we

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don't like stewed apples, how glad he used to be to have a little molasses given him occasionally for a great treat."

I hardly knew what desirable comment to make to these complaints, so was silent.

"Then he used to be awful fond of work, and doing his lessons was a downright treat to him. I don't see how he ever grew up, he was so good. At the same time," with a confidential air, and coming closer to me, "it's funny how I heard him and Uncle Will talking and laughing one night after I had gone to bed about how they used to rob orchards and play truant for days and days, and plague the master with their tricks."

"And how did you happen to hear this, when you were upstairs in bed?" asked I.

"Oh, well, I was coming downstairs to ask mother what stockings I'd put on in the morning, and when I heard them remembering things and telling such interesting stories I thought I—I wouldn't trouble her, and went back to bed—after a while."

"Perhaps you were mistaken in what they were speaking about," I felt constrained to suggest.

"Maybe I was!" returned he, with derision, and I said no more.

"All I know is," he concluded, decisively, "that these days you can't play hookey like that. If you're away half a day there's a note from

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the teacher chasing you up. And if we threw snowballs or faked apples, or set off firecrackers like they used to do, there'd be a bobby after us inside two minutes. Talk about boys having a better time nowadays!" And with a disgusted air he went to put away the despised lawnmower and get out that snake-in-the-grass, the hose.

IX.

SYMPATHY.

“THERE! there! Mother will kiss it and make it all better.”

The magical touch was lightly given. Youth’s agonized roar, that a moment ago had been filling the house—with reference to a pinched finger—was hushed, and at a few tender words quickly subsided into an occasional sob, as Baby told his mother all about how it happened and listened to her commiserating words.

“What a thing sympathy is!” remarked Mary, after we had left them. “Now, that youngster’s little face was still puckered with pain, and he would have been howling to beat the band yet if his mother had not been there to comfort him. We all like sympathy!”

“True,” said I, “your observation does you credit—though I believe that it is not entirely a new thought.”

“Well, I’m not a new woman, and I don’t see why I should be expected to have a new thought,” returned Mary, flippantly. “By the way, I did think of rather a smart thing yesterday anent the new woman that you perhaps might work up into a sort of joke.”

“What was it?” cried I, eagerly. “That will

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be an original idea for sure! So far no one has ever attempted to perpetrate a witticism at her expense."

Mary regarded me doubtfully, but went on:

"You might bring it in something this way. Johnny might ask, 'Paw, what do people mean by "new woman"?' Then his father could say, 'You have heard of old maids? Well, in most cases the "new woman" is just another name for the same old maid.' Now! don't you think that pretty clever for me?"

"Mary! Mary! I'm afraid it is only one type of advanced thought that you have in your mind."

"Perhaps. But that is the kind of new women I've mostly come across," and Mary nodded her head wisely.

"We were talking of sympathy, though," she went on. "From the cradle to the grave it never comes amiss to any human being. Half the time that's what babies cry for—there's very often not another thing the matter with them. They want you to soothe them and say, 'Poor little thing!' And what do people go and die for? Because they know that no matter how horrid they may have been some one will say, 'Ah! poor creature!'"

This startling theory rather took my breath away, and we walked on for a few moments in silence. Presently Mary broke into a little reminiscent laugh.

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“I was just remembering some of the things I did when I was little. Near us there lived a pretty child with something the matter with her hip that necessitated her using a crutch. We all played together, and I used to hear passers-by pitying her and saying what a sad thing it was. Somehow I came to think it a pretty fine thing to receive all this commiseration, and felt defrauded of a great deal of the consolation of life by my health and heartiness. No one looked at me sorrowfully nor made compassionate remarks in my hearing about my ‘sad and patient little face.’ I yearned for sympathy. I grew to positively envy the girl with the crutch. I longed to have something the matter with me that would look very bad and not hurt much—something that would move people to tears.”

“And what did you do about it?” questioned I, amused at the feeling recital of her young ambition.

She laughed again.

“I’ll tell you what I did. My brother Jack and I used to go on a street where we were not known, and I’d pretend I was blind, and he’d lead me. That was lovely! People were so sorry for me. I would hear them say what a terrible affliction it was, and tell their own children how thankful they should be to have their eyesight, and say what a terrible thing it was to be blind. We thoroughly enjoyed it. When I

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was tired of doing the blind act he used to walk lame. But the thing we reaped most pity on was a small sofa-cushion hump I occasionally wore on my back. That was very satisfactory; it never failed us."

"You little frauds! How long did you carry this thing on?"

"A considerable time. Unfortunately mother was out calling one day, and came across us unexpectedly. Jack had a bandage over one eye, and I was sporting the cushion. In the kindness of her heart she stopped to speak a word to the two pitiful little objects." Mary ceased her story with an expressive smile.

"I suppose her subsequent treatment entirely cured you of all such ills."

"Yes," returned Mary. "A wonderfully clever practitioner, my mother!"

As Mary says, we all like sympathy. Some of us may not think we do, but in one form or another it is dear to the heart of every one of us. A fellow-feeling with others in their varied conditions of joy or grief is a good thing to cultivate. It broadens the mind, it enlarges the heart, it takes one's attention off one's own mental or physical pains—just as interesting conversation has been known to cure toothache. What sorrows have been lightened, what joys intensified, by the tender words or feeling silence of some sympathetic soul! It may be but the touch of a hand, the glance of an eye, that shows

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us we are understood; but is there any offering more acceptable to the lonely soul of each one of us—to that inner and hidden self that, unknown to all but the possessor, goes through life solitary, save for those subtle flashes of recognition that sympathy may afford? Like the quality of mercy, pity is twice blessed. Gushing forth, it cleanses and reanimates the heart of the giver, while reviving and soothing those weary ones whose way may have fallen in arid places.

There are many proud spirits that deny all need for pity. There may be some truly happy ones who are entirely to be felicitated. There are some moderately fortunate ones that, in their desire to arouse sympathy, resort, like Mary, to artifice to extract the soothing balm. Perhaps they have slight indigestion—and fancy they experience sufferings never before borne by mortal man. They may have lost some money—and give you long and fanciful tales of their former grandeur. Uncongenial relatives (to whom they are often very nasty) make their lives a burden—and they tell you all about it.

When I was very young I knew a man with a broken heart. He told me it was broken. I found out afterwards that he told all the girls the same thing. In the light of more mature years I have come to the conclusion that it was his way of flirting, and that he derived great satisfaction from it—but oh! how I pitied him

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then! He said that life held nothing more for him; that religion was a hollow mockery, earth a barren waste; that he only went about and danced and mingled in society to hide his breaking heart. He asked me if I thought suicide was never justifiable, and dropped dark hints about not being long for this world. Then he would sigh, or laugh bitterly. It was very affecting! I never quite found out what the sorrow was. It was past and over, and he would not now have it otherwise, he told me—only the joy had gone out of existence for him. I don't to this day know whether she had thrown him over or died. I was so sorry for him—used to sit out on the verandah in the moonlight with him (he disliked a crowd), and try to comfort him. He said he liked to talk to me, it lightened the burden; I seemed to understand him, and he could confide in me in a way he would never think of doing to anyone else. He said I was a dear little friend—and occasionally forgot he was holding my hand longer than was necessary. I knew he just forgot, and thought it would look ridiculous to take it away. (Sometimes you are very green when you are young!) I respected his confidences. I've cried about that man at night. I think I prayed for him! After he had left the town I discovered that he had trotted out that broken heart of his and sought consolation from three or four of my friends. I don't believe he had a broken heart at all; it was

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just bandaged up for the occasion. Anyway, it is satisfactory to know that he is comfortably married, and has long given up parading that damaged portion of his anatomy.

Mary says she knew just the same kind of pathetic sufferer. He had fine eyes and a confiding way of seeking sympathy. She speaks of him as a real fraud, and heartlessly gives it as her opinion that impressionable people should be wary of a man with a heart sorrow—that sometimes it gets to be his trump suit, and he learns to manipulate it extremely dexterously, raking in any amount of that soul-satisfying pity that is akin to love. She says, moreover, that, strangely enough, the only person that she has reason “for certain sure” to believe really is heart-broken goes about with such an ordinary air that you would never be aware of the internal fracture from outward observation—but this may be an exceptional case.

Even those that are too proud to voice their misfortunes abroad, to accept what may be a half-contemptuous pity, have the same universal desire for the sweetness of sympathy. Look at the people that write to the “Answers to Correspondents” columns of various publications. Reading between the lines of the answers, one can imagine the outbursts of confidence of which the editor has been the recipient—the ambitions, hopes, fears, passionate longings that have been opened up to her—the hidden sorrows and

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disappointments, the heart hunger, the vain regrets that have been laid bare—the carefully-hidden skeletons that have been taken out and rattled at her, till their dreadful old bones have been weary enough to lie still for awhile when replaced in the closet, and for a little space cease to haunt their owners. All this for a breath of human sympathy, even from an unknown fellow-creature.

X.

INFANT LITERATURE.

DID you ever set out to find a nice, simple and entertaining book for a little child, thinking it would be a very easy thing to accomplish? I did—and found them more difficult to discover than four-leaved clover. I am referring to stories for very little children. There are plenty of suitable tales for children from six years up. For younger children the principal offering is nursery rhymes that, apart from the jingle which may be pleasing to infant ears, are meaningless twaddle, unintelligible gibberish, or the recital of some most unpleasant occurrence.

Custom has established these literary gems as being the right and proper food on which to regale the opening mind. Delicious morsels, strengthening alike to moral and mental development! Let us take some at random from one of the volumes I invested in. Why, the contents of the daily papers are tame compared with the accidents, murders and sensational items therein recorded; and yet a cry goes up about the unbridled press from the very people who complacently pour into their innocent babies' wondering ears such painful episodes as the following:

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“Robin a Bobbin, he bent his bow ;
He shot at a cock and he killed a crow ;
He shot at another and killed his brother,
And he's to be hanged to-morrow.”

Why should this terrible incident and the awful punishment that will overtake the wretched fratricide be considered desirable knowledge for your child's tender years to be weighted with? Better take him to an execution next!

In “Jack and Jill ” the evident point is that Jack nearly killed himself, and we are led to believe that Jill also was severely injured; but instead of the child's sympathy being aroused, the accident is dwelt upon as being rather a good joke at their expense.

And this delicate pleasantry that we find on the next page is likely to encourage tenderness and considerateness of those who are helpless and afflicted, is it not?

“As I was going to sell my eggs,
I met a man with bandy legs,
Bandy legs and crooked toes,
I tripped him up,
And he fell on his nose.”

What a joke! Nearly as amusing as the heartless ill-treatment of the poor old woman who “went to market her eggs for to sell,” and falling asleep on the king's highway, was scandalously robbed of most of her clothing by a facetious pedlar, and left to freeze. A most laughable account is given of how she began to

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shiver and shake and cry pitifully when she awoke; and her distress when her little dog failed to recognize her upon her return home is told as being comical in the extreme. The whole story is really too exquisitely funny for anything. There's nothing like cultivating a fine sense of humor in a child!

Listen to this praiseworthy plan of stimulating devotion in aged humanity:

“Goosey, goosey, gander,
Whither shall I wander?
Upstairs and downstairs,
And in my lady's chamber.
There I met an old man
Who wouldn't say his prayers,
I took him by the left leg
And threw him down the stairs.”

A little disconnected and inconsequent, but this does not matter, and the finale is all that could be wished.

This throwing down seems to be a rather favorite diversion of many nursery heroes and heroines. You remember the rather disappointingly abrupt version of the old woman's treatment of her calf:

“There was an old woman sat spinning,
That's the beginning.
She had a calf,
That's half.
She took it out of the stall
And threw it over the wall,
That's all.”

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As a child I always bitterly resented the too bald rendition of this thrilling affair, and still it appears to me that there is ample foundation for building a dramatic and lengthy narrative, filled with all those satisfying particulars that are so annoyingly absent. What did the calf do to enrage its owner? Was it killed when she threw it over the wall? Was she sorry after, or did she exult in her cruelty?

Then what improving lesson is supposed to be learned from the actions of that overwrought woman whose limited abode, being a shoe, was so unsuited to hold her unlimited family? (Except, as some think, the shoe had been made of a size to fit the foot of a mountain.) I don't wonder much at her whipping them all soundly and putting them to bed, but why dwell upon the unreasonably severe punishment meted out to innocent and harmless children whose only fault, we have reason to believe, was being hungry; and who seemingly took their breadless broth without demur when it was dished up to them?

And, pray, what good purpose is served by giving long and harrowing particulars of the funeral obsequies of Cock Robin, and an account of the previous inquest held upon his remains—when the murderous sparrow, feeling it useless to deny his guilt in the face of two witnesses, defiantly acknowledges his crime and glories in the deed?

Is the infant taste in literature known to run

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to morbidness, that gruesome tales and horrid happenings are the principal topics presented? Small wonder that the very young so often are unaccountably moved to tears. It may be that they ponder more deeply than we think on the appalling narratives so glibly recounted to them, and it unnerves them. These are not the worst of the nursery tales by any means. What about "Red Riding Hood," "The Babes in the Wood," "Jack the Giant Killer," "Blue Beard"? Ghastly tragedies, bloody murders, all of them.

Perhaps you say, "But a child does not take in or understand these things?" Then why not give him something he *can* understand? What grown people generally like in fiction is something that appeals to them as being real—descriptions of scenes and incidents into which they can enter, delineation of character that is true to life, the presentment of something that arouses our better feelings, purifying and ennobling. Instruction books are good, but we do not always want to be taken over new ground. There are times when we simply wish to be amused. It may be so with four-year-olds—we are all but children of a larger growth. Imparting knowledge is excellent, but leads to questioning and discussion; and there are times when an amusing story entirely within the scope of the child's observation and knowledge

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would be a relief to much-catechised parents and guardians weary of explaining.

Do you ever, thrown upon your own resources, essay to entertain some friend of tender years by telling him stories? You quickly find that what pleases him best is something that his mind can grasp. "When-you-were-a-little-boy" incidents are prime favorites, and every-day doings of an imaginary child such as himself are of absorbing interest. The closer the resemblance between the hero's surroundings and his own, the more enjoyable the story—so long as you do not work in too obtrusive a moral. The youngest child resents this. The moral should always be there, but carefully and attractively garbed—and more in the whole tenor of the story than of evident and deliberate intent.

My idea for a little child's book is that the simplest, shortest story should be artistically true to life—not as life appears to us, but taken from the child's standpoint. The happenings in his own simple little round of existence are of vastly more interest than the destiny of nations. The tiny incidents of his own daily life and experience, seen through his wee round eyes, are magnified into affairs of great moment. Then tell him about something he is interested in. Why puzzle his tender brain with a jargon of idiotic sounds, or insult his ears with the recital of doings and events that, when you think of them reasonably, are seen to be a mixture of

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poor English, bad manners, and worse morals—of improbabilities that one is only too glad to admit could never come true.

Some day I'm going to publish a book of short stories intended for the youngest kind of a child that desires to hear a story. It's going to have only one hero, over and over again, and his surroundings will be such as will seem natural to the ordinary middle-class child. There will be nothing unpleasant or likely to make a youngster afraid to be alone in the dark, and no suggestions for mischief in it. There will be a tinge of pathos and a touch of humor, a distinct and well-defined plot in each tale—and a satisfactory conclusion. There will be no glaring discrepancies between the illustrations and the text, and the whole will be expressed in simple, sensible language. Altogether it will be a most artistic and desirable work, and if people are as intelligent as I take them to be, and know how to appreciate a really good thing when they come across it, the success of the volume is assured. Meantime, if any publisher cares to examine the manuscript, I shall be charmed to allow him to do so—and if he will kindly take it home and let his second youngest pronounce judgment upon its merits it may be placed before the public sooner than I at present anticipate.

XI.

HER BÊTE NOIR.

"Who's the man I so often see walking home with Eva?" inquired I of Mary, referring to the stalwart companion of a mutual friend, whom we could see advancing up the street.

Mary craned her neck a trifle that she might have a better view from the window.

"Why, that's young Smith"—only she didn't call him Smith—"Arthur Smith. You remember him! Hasn't he improved wonderfully? He's been away a year, but his affection has never wandered from his first love. His people are well off, and it would be a good match for Eva, but she makes all kinds of fun of him—says she can't bear him."

"I've heard that sort of thing before."

"But, really, I believe in this case she isn't 'putting on' in the least—she told me she positively hates him, and only receives his attentions because he won't be shaken off."

"Poor girl! that's too bad."

"I believe you're making fun—but look! she's coming in. Let's tease her a bit about him, and see how she takes it."

"We saw you parting from the devoted Smith," cried Mary, as Eva joined us. "He

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was so taken up watching the last of you that he walked into a woman and a baby-carriage and fell over a youngster on a tricycle. I heard the youngster inquiring pertinaciously why he 'couldn't look where he was goin''—it cost him ten cents and a wipe of his nice clean handkerchief before he was able to fix the boy up. Don't you think it's a serious thing to turn a young man's head to that extent?" inquired the speaker, solemnly.

"Oh, nonsense!" returned Eva, with a careless laugh. "Devoted Smith, indeed! who wants his devotion? I'm sure I don't. I'm just sick and tired of him tagging around after me. I won't stand it, and the sooner he knows it the better. Big, clumsy thing! He'd run into a coal cart—never looks where he's going." Then after a moment—"But you don't really think he was watching me on the door-step, do you?"

"Well, he might have been observing the creeper on the porch," conceded Mary, dryly; "remarkably fine creeper that."

"Seriously, Eva," remarked I, gravely, "do you think it is right to encourage that poor fellow the way you do, if you don't care for him?"

Indignation flashed from the brown eyes.

"Encourage him! Who dares to say I encourage him? What can I do about it? He won't take a hint. I've told him over and over again that I don't want him, as plainly as I can—but he doesn't take a bit of notice."

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"For that matter, what is there about him that you don't like? He's a fine-looking, agreeable man, and they say he's so steady, and good to his father and mother. Why don't you marry him?"

"Marry him! The idea!" cried Eva through her blushes, with derisive ridicule. "Why, he's only a boy! I've known him all my life. His father and mother think the sun rises and sets on him—and he really is a good fellow. But it's ridiculous to say he's handsome, the great big ugly thing! I never see anything to admire in him, with his gawky ways, and those blue eyes of his following you around everywhere you go in that foolish way. Besides, he's a big softy—does everything I tell him. I like a man that has some 'go' to him. Arthur hasn't sense enough to flirt with some other girl when I'm talking to other men, but stands around and glowers and looks doleful till I could just shake him. It's none of his business who I dance with, and I won't stand being dictated to by him, and the sooner he knows it the better. He's a perfect nuisance, and I wouldn't marry a thing like that if there was not another man in the world!"

During this recital of her good and sufficient reasons for objecting to Mr. Smith as a possible *parti*, Miss Eva had grown more and more excited and decisive. Scorn, derision and ridicule had pointed her sentences when she mentioned

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his shortcomings. Aversion and contempt had marked her features when she dwelt upon his obnoxious attentions to herself. Stern determination showed itself about her pretty mouth as she delivered her unalterable decision. Evidently Arthur wasn't "in it." Mary glanced at me with a "what-did-I-tell-you?" expression.

I thought I'd try another tack.

"Oh, well," remarked I, soothingly, "we won't say anything more about it. I had no idea you disliked him so thoroughly."

"Well, I do."

"Of course you know him a great deal better than I do, and if he's the kind of man you say I don't wonder you can't bear him. I thought he looked rather a well set up sort of chap; but I've no doubt he is slow—a big man is often as stupid as an owl."

Eva stirred in her seat uneasily, but nodded an agreement.

There was a twinkle in Mary's eyes as she followed my lead by saying, sympathetically, "And after all, I don't consider it very gentlemanly of him to annoy Eva the way he does; but he doesn't know enough to see when he isn't wanted. Don't you remember, he used to hang around Lily C— till she was desperate?"

Eva confessed coldly that she didn't remember.

"Don't you?" with amiable surprise. "She made all sorts of fun of his gumpy ways and that strawstack head of his. They say his mother

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spoils him awfully, and that he's a clumsy dancer—can't keep time. The girls used to say his ear was all on the outside of his head," and Mary laughed amusedly.

There was an ominous sparkle in Eva's eyes, and she didn't join in the laugh.

"But he really has improved since those days," remarked I, in mild remonstrance. "If he would only hold his head up he would not be half bad."

"It's his nose that's too heavy, I think—makes him droop," gravely attested Mary, watching the effect. "What a pity he has such an ugly nose. They say he uses it to sing through. Does he ever sing for you, Eva?"

"He sings very well indeed," replied Eva, shortly.

"Does he, really, now? What a shame to make such fun of him as they do! Lily was saying it would take all his father's money to get a wife for him. He certainly has no style, as you were saying," she went on, meditatively, with an innocent gaze fixed on Eva's changing countenance, "but do you think—"

But this was too much.

"I know one thing I think," flashed out Eva, "and that is that Lily would have been only too glad to accept him if he had proposed to her. Everybody knows she tried her hardest to catch him—and she's just a jealous, spiteful thing! If Arthur is not more of a gentleman than that

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Jack Brown she thinks so much of, it's funny to me; and handsomer, too! He has the best nose in the city, and you know it," turning defiantly to Mary. "Not that I care what people say about him; only I must say I'm disappointed in you two turning over such a lot of unkind and wicked stories about anyone," and refusing to listen further, she was gone.

After she had left us we gazed at each other in silence for a few moments; then laughter took possession of us.

"Do you still think she hates him?" asked I, presently.

And for reply all Mary did was to laugh again.

XII.

ON THE MODERN CHILD.

"AND how did the picnic come off?" asked I, of Mary.

As a faithful teacher in St. Something's Sunday-school, Mary always participates in the summer outing. This joyful event took place the other day, and I had not seen my friend since.

"Oh, well enough," returned she, rather listlessly.

"You had a nice, fine day."

"Yes, the day was good"—still without enthusiasm—"and none of the youngsters got killed, and they seemed as little dissatisfied as usual, and the teachers survived—so that altogether I suppose it ought to be considered to have passed off in a highly satisfactory manner."

This tinge of irony was foreign to Mary's usual conversation. I regarded her curiously.

"A long course of annual picnics seems to have palled upon you," remarked I.

"Indeed it has! In my estimation the day of usefulness for the Sunday-school picnic is about over." Mary spoke in the tone of conviction of one who has considered the question in all its bearings and has come to a definite conclusion.

"How do you make that out? I know it's a

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little trouble to those who get it up, but it is always looked forward to and is a great pleasure to the children."

"I suppose there always are a few of the poorer children who enjoy it—and that's all that reconciles me to the affair at all! You must remember that the old-fashioned brand of easily-pleased child has died out, and there is no satisfying the child of to-day. Now, in a congregation such as ours" (Mary belongs to an up-town church) "there are very few of the children that are not taken out to the parks, or over to the Island for little trips on the boats, several times during the season. Most of them have too much jaunting, and they get critical, and it's no joke trying to get up an expedition that will please them."

"I do think these trips by water and rail are a mistake. It's too great a risk, with all those children. How can people look after them?"

"Nothing but a merciful Providence ever brings the little terrors home alive! We went to Lorne Park, you know, and the way those boys hung over the taffrail and chased one another around the deck, or crawled out on the bowsprit and danced and balanced themselves with airy grace thereon, was enough to turn your hair grey—and the girls were not much better! They all ran around wildly, playing tag and shrieking, and losing their hats overboard, and poking into the engine-room, and falling down

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and tearing their clothes, and telling us they were hungry every ten minutes, and asking how soon we'd 'get there.' I was very thankful when we did get there—for I thought some of those future pillars of the church would surely fill early and aqueous graves." And Mary sighed at the remembrance of their fearsome antics.

"Why didn't they take them somewhere by street-cars?"

"That's what a great many of the teachers wanted when we held our meeting to decide, but bless you! the youngsters turn up their noses at street-cars and High Park. 'Yah! street-cars! They'll be makin' us walk next thing!' I heard a boy say to his friends, in disgusted tones, when he heard of the suggestion. Street-cars, indeed! It will soon be that you'll have to take them to New York or Quebec by special train to satisfy the young beggars. When I was a little girl (we lived in a country town, to be sure) we used to have our picnic in one of the fields on the glebe farm after the hay was cut. The smaller ones were taken there in farmers' wagons, rigged up with a sort of rack to keep them from falling out, and the big ones walked. It was the same every year—and we always had a lovely time, and never thought of anything different. If it rained we just had tea in the school-house, and there was nothing more about it. I don't say we never took more things on our plates than any human beings could devour—

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and truth compels me to admit that bread and butter may have been slyly disposed of in some way that was not gastronomical when we saw something nice in the tart or cake line coming—but we never treated buns with the contempt the youngsters do nowadays.”

“Buns! Don’t they approve of buns?”

Mary looked unutterable things.

“There seems to be something positively demoralizing about buns!” said she, impressively. “I think it’s the shape of them—they’re so handy to play ball with! Even the best of children yield to temptation and toss them about. They never dream of eating them. Carefully-made sandwiches and the best of cake are what they expect. In another year or two we’ll have to give them salads and ice-cream and charlotte russe—and they won’t be half as well pleased as children used to be with a bun and some cookies and a glass of milk. The farther you take them, and the more you give them, the more tired and cross and dissatisfied they are by the time you get them home. I have not the least doubt that, after all our trouble and work, half our scholars reached home grumbling, and told their people it was ‘a ratty old picnic, anyway, and they never had no fun.’”

Mary’s mimicry of the thankless small boy’s complaining tone was true to life.

‘Yes,’ she went on, “the Sunday-school picnic has grown out of all reasonable propor-

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tion. It's a dreadful undertaking for very little result—a toil of a pleasure. There are too many children to handle in a large school, and if the weather is bad it spoils all your plans. Now in winter you get up your entertainment and have it (except it's a sleigh-ride and the snow goes back on you), and the children are sometimes quite pleased with their recitations and tableaux, and Christmas trees and things. You are not dependent on so many contingencies for success. The whole thing won't be spoiled because you find, when you are twenty miles from home, that somebody has forgotten to pack the cups, or the sugar has been left behind, or Johnny Smith has fallen overboard, or Lucy Brown been lost.'

"We had an awful crowd on board coming home. The boat people had faithfully promised that they would take no other excursion on the same date as ours—they always promise that, its very decent of them!"

"Then why the crowd?"

"Oh, they didn't keep their promise—none of the lines ever do in that particular. There were two other picnics on hand that day, and the youngsters got mixed. I'm sure we fed hundreds that didn't belong to our crowd at all. And some of our own were overlooked, I hear, and there is dreadful trouble over it. That's the worst of the big picnic! It is almost impossible to manage everything satisfactorily. The

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commissariat department demands so much attention from those in charge of the expedition that there is hardly any time to devote to amusing the youngsters, and they just hang around most of the time. When the races begin they fall and hurt themselves, and quarrel over the prizes, and when they get them say they are no good. And the grown-up people come home nearly dead, and the children are cross and tired and ought to have been in bed three hours ago, and the parents all vow they'll never let them go again, and—oh, don't let us talk of it any more! It will be a year before the next one!"

There is something in what Mary says. The evolution of the Sunday-school picnic within the last fifteen or twenty years has been wonderful. Whether or not the present scale upon which it is planned gives any more real pleasure to those participating than the annual "treat" held in some conveniently-adjacent grove used to do is a question. To my mind, too much is attempted. The pleasure-seekers start too early, and stay too late, and go too far. I have in my mind a trip undertaken a few seasons ago by a very large school in this city that was a "won't go home till morning" affair. A storm arose on the homeward journey, and a boat-load of seasick young people drifted about on Lake Ontario "till daylight did appear," while the wharves were filled with agonized parents. If the trip is arranged to give gratification to those children

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into whose lives little pleasure enters, a simple outing will be enjoyed. As for those more fortunate ones whose parents can afford to take them here and there, it really does not matter if the programme fails to come up to their critical and pampered taste. You will not be able to satisfy them in any case, and simplicity might have unexpected charms for them. In many cases, when trips by boat or rail are projected, parents who cannot accompany their children are forced to deny them the pleasure of going, or, having allowed their young hopefuls to depart with the scatter-brained, squirming mass of youthful humanity, spend the long day—and too often half the night—wondering if they will get home alive. And when the little wrecks appear, weary and cranky and worn-out, such anxious watchers are apt to say, like Mary, “Thank goodness! they are home safely, and it won’t come again for another year!”

XIII.

THE SUMMER GUEST.

THERE were three of them—a mother and two daughters, I surmised from their conversation. The lunch-room was crowded, and they came and sat at the table where I was awaiting the pleasure of the supercilious maiden who had taken my order in an incidental sort of way some time previous.

After a careful glance at me, to be satisfied I was unknown to them, they did not allow my presence to materially interfere with their conversation. It seemed that the widowed mother and younger daughter resided in the city. The other, a pretty but rather thin and careworn woman, was married, and lived in some country place—being only in town for a day's shopping. She was leaving again by an afternoon train, and as they evidently had had little opportunity for converse, they talked on, exchanging confidences and giving messages regardless of me. There was a certain judicious suppression of surnames, but that was all. I heard how the children came to contract scarlet fever last spring through "his" sister's carelessness, and how the hired girl immediately left, and what

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a time she had had—how the extension to her house was scarcely finished, and they didn't intend having the upstairs plastered until next fall, everyone was so busy now with the harvest; how the little dresses they sent her were just the right size, and she thought the trimming on those pinafores lovely, but the curtains she sent down for were not the right length, and she'd had to turn them down at the top.

The arrival of my ice-cream created a diversion, and they clung to the presiding tray-bearer—who had her eye on another group—until she deigned to attend to their wants. I think it was amazement that any three women on earth should have their minds made up regarding what they wanted, and be ready to give their order without hesitation or discussion, that impressed the waitress into bringing their luncheon almost at once. I don't wonder. I'm only surprised she didn't fall down dead with the shock. I don't suppose she had ever experienced anything like it in her life before. We all know the usual procedure of a couple of women who go in to have lunch together, and the length of time they are in deciding what they will have to eat. The waitress standing by is aware that in nine cases out of ten the final decision will be coffee and rolls, or ice-cream and sponge cake, but she patiently listens while they wander all over the card, discussing the various dishes before bringing up at their toast and tea. I have observed

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men occasionally experience considerable difficulty in deciding and be very forgetful in completing their orders—necessitating a lingering, and repeated returns of the waitress. But in such a case, curiously enough, that young lady invariably owns uncommonly fine eyes, a bewitching smile, or a demurely pretty way of answering questions; and a dark suspicion arises in one's mind that the hesitation and indecision they exhibit is not the *bona fide* article, but rather the outcome of flirtatious aforethought. But this is wandering from my three neighbors.

Presently the married daughter inquired, *apropos* of some mutual friends, "Where are they going this summer?"

"I don't know," replied the mother; "they were inquiring after you very kindly the other day."

"And what did you say?" putting down her spoon and regarding the speaker anxiously.

"Oh, I told them you were not at all well, and the masons were busy in your house yet, and everything in a muddle, and I didn't think they'd be through until September."

A look of relief stole over her daughter's face.

"Good for you! The house is very comfortable, and I'm feeling stronger every day now; but I really can't be bothered with a lot of visitors in harvest time—and they can well afford to go somewhere where people make their living

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by keeping summer boarders. They don't want to see me, or they'd come at some other time of year, when there isn't so much work going on. I'm really lonesome in winter, and would be glad to have them. But I'm that worn out in July and August, what with the harvest hands, and fruit and butter, and extra cooking, that I haven't a minute to sit down and speak to them. John's busy out in the fields looking after the men, and he hates dressing up for meals. You know how it is when you're hot and tired. And they expect you to go driving with them when the horses are in use, and to sit up in the evening because it's 'so lovely and cool in the moonlight'—they haven't been up since four in the morning! No, I want peace and quietness, and no visitors this summer. I'd like to have time to enjoy the country myself!"

"That's just what I thought. I'm sure you were nearly dead, with Susie and all her children last year."

"Oh, well, I asked them—and Susie is always very kind, and makes any of us welcome in town. Besides, she understands how different things are on a farm, and doesn't expect so much. She turned right in and helped me many a time. And though the children did stuff themselves with green fruit, and chase John's prize calves, and frighten the hens off the nest, half the time they didn't know they were doing wrong. By the way," with sudden thought, "have you heard

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from Hamilton lately? Did they," with a look of intelligence, "say if the girls were going away anywhere?"

"No; only mentioned that Janet had not been well lately, and a change would do her good."

"Well, I have an idea that they would like to come to me for a month. So when you're writing—you'll be writing, won't you?—you might just mention that I'm looking wretched myself, and my girl is going to be married—she is, next fall—and I'm thinking of going to Belleville for a change (I am thinking of it—haven't made up my mind quite), do you understand? It will come better from you than from me."

A comical glance passed between them as the mother nodded her head.

"And when you are writing to the other crowd—Ida and those, you know!" said the other daughter, with intent, addressing her married sister, "you might let them know that mother and I are going out of town—we are not quite sure where yet, but we'll likely be away all summer—all summer, mind you! Make a point of writing, will you? Some people think Toronto is not a half bad place in summer," said she, laughing.

"I can easily do that, for I hope you and mother will come to me for a while, anyway. I'd love to have you! You know what I mean about visitors! It's these people that only seem to remember your existence during about three

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months of the year—when the fruit is ripe and it's hot in the city—that I object to.”

At this point in their conversation, my ice-cream having come to an end, I rose and left them—but their remarks stayed in my memory.

People living in the country are not, as a rule, inhospitable; on the contrary, hospitality is often one of their most conspicuous virtues. Sometimes it is abused by those that accept it—often, I firmly believe, as much through thoughtlessness as intent. Naturally, it is in the heat of summer that the minds of dwellers in cities turn to the cool delights, the fresh sweetness of wood and field and river, and oft-times Mrs. Semi-detached casts about in her mind for some conveniently-situated friend.

“There is Mrs. Hundredakers,” says she to herself, “she asked me to come and see her some time, when I met her last winter at the Browns’. The children are all home from school—I could send Tom and Katie to their uncle’s, and Mary could come with me and help mind the baby. I think I’ll write to Mrs. H. and get her to ask us.”

So a discreetly-worded, friendly epistle brings back a definite invitation from poor Mrs. Hundredakers, who had scarcely counted upon her vague words being so literally taken, and Mrs. Semi-detached, her eldest girl and the baby leave for the country. They don’t take their best clothes, because it would be foolish, and any-

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thing will do for the country; whereat their hostess is disappointed, as she counted upon her city visitors cutting rather a dash. She knows they dress well in town, and resents the fact that Mrs. S. is unaccompanied by her choicest attire when she comes to visit her. Mrs. S. may not mean it as a slight; may honestly consider it would be bad taste and out of place to flaunt her city finery in a quiet country place. But let me tell her she never made a greater mistake than in leaving her organdie muslin and new silk dress at home—that is, if she wishes to please her entertainers. People in the country expect to see something rather fine on city folk, and a hostess, no matter how unpretentiously she may be garbed herself, likes her visitors to do her credit. You needn't wear your best tog-gery morning, noon and night—but take it with you, pray take it with you!

One is very apt to look forward to fresh fruit and vegetables galore, and an unlimited supply of new milk and cream on a farm, forgetting that, in the important business of getting the crops in in the spring, the planting of the garden is too often a secondary consideration to the farmer, and, as regards cream, overlooking the fact that butter-making probably furnishes the principal, if not only, pocket-money enjoyed by his wife. Then the exigencies of country life are not realized by the like of Mrs. Semi-detached. She fails to understand the different

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respect with which it is advisable to treat the "help" if her mistress would continue to enjoy the pleasure of that independent young person's society, the boon of her assistance. She does not know the extra work her late breakfast involves, and what diplomacy has to be employed by her hostess to secure the occasional use of a horse to take her driving. She has no idea of the unearthly hours at which that busy woman rises in order to have time to devote to her guest later on in the day. She takes it for granted that her letters can be posted and her mail called for regularly, and admits that she misses a daily paper. She is not aware that her entertainers are making any special efforts on her behalf—and as likely as not returns home telling her city friends she is glad to get back to civilization once more—and forgetting to give her hostess anything but a disconcertingly ambiguous invitation to return the visit. Is it any wonder that that worried woman breathes a sigh of relief at her departure, and determines to be more guarded in her offers of hospitality in future?

Then there are the people who have little places just a short way out of town, within driving distance, or just a step from the car service. What a surfeit of visitors they often have during the summer months! It is pleasant to have your friends come out when your lawn is velvety, your roses in bloom; when you can

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point with swelling pride to the most successful of vegetable gardens, and lead them through orchards whose overhanging branches are burdened with rich promise of luscious fruit. It is even gratifying to send them home laden with toothsome remembrances of their outing, and great bunches of sweet-smelling flowers, but—when their visitations are invariably timed to coincide with the season of strawberries and cherries, or plums and the juicy grape, it is natural for the agricultural heart to lose confidence in said acquaintances' disinterested friendship. Why don't they ever come during the dreary autumn, or visit you through the long winter, when you are shut in to a great extent, time hangs heavy on your hands, and the society of a friend would be a real pleasure? Though you may be glad to see them in summer, the mind is apt to dwell on these questions. And the only probable solution does not often point to that unselfish friendship that is so sweet to the human breast.

To be sure, there are countless interchanges of hospitality between dwellers in town and country, delightful and satisfactory to both. I am only considering a few ideas that occurred to me in the light of the possible reasons for the self-protective policy displayed by my friends of the lunch-room.

XIV.

A WAY OUT.

"MARY," said I, *apropos* of something that had been disturbing my mind for a couple of days, "Mary, you remember Nan Winters—little Mrs. Brown? When I met her the other day I was shocked to see the change in her. She's a perfect wreck—old and haggard and ill, and so nervous-looking! Why, she used to be the picture of health and happiness—and always so pretty, and smartly dressed!"

Mary nodded.

"You know I have not seen her since a few months after she married that handsome Jack Brown that we all liked so much. He was wealthy, and she is likely to have everything a woman wants. I cannot understand it. I assure you at first I scarcely knew her. She said she had not been ill. What's the trouble? Do you know what makes her look like that?"

I saw she did know, though she was not quick to reply.

"What's the cause?" repeated I, after waiting a moment.

The answer came, slowly and deliberately, "Drink."

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The unexpectedness of it, the shock of the idea, held me silent a space.

"Drink! Surely you must be mistaken!" cried I, in horror. "I cannot believe Nan Winters could so lower herself! You must be mad!"

She listened to my remonstrances unmoved.

"I'm not. That's just what the trouble is—whiskey!"

"But, Mary," reasoned I, "what would she do it for? I might understand some poor creature with terrible pain to bear, or in loneliness, grief and despair, resorting to intoxicants to gain fancied strength, or oblivion. But a woman of refinement—a good woman with a husband and child to consider, apart from her own self-respect—oh! I cannot believe it. You must be dreaming!"

Mary remained silent.

"She used to be such a lovely girl, and gentle and affectionate—and if anyone ever were in love with a husband she was in love with Jack. Poor man! what a horrible thing for him if what you suggest is true. I *am* sorry!"

Still silence on Mary's part.

"But," continued I, at last, reluctantly accepting the idea, "if she really does take too much it accounts for everything—her loss of interest in things, her falling off in looks, her nervous shrinking from old friends. I don't wonder she is ashamed to look people in the face. It is appalling! How any woman can so

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lower herself, can be so lost to all that she should be as to take to drink! Whatever drove her to it?"

"Oh, bless you, *she* doesn't drink, poor soul! It's her husband does the drinking," explained Mary, dryly.

Evidently she enjoyed the effect. It did take me aback in the full tide of my disapproval.

"Oh!" was all I found to say, somewhat lamely, if comprehensively, subsiding from my eloquence of disapprobation.

"Go on," said Mary, encouragingly, "go on. You were saying, while you misunderstood me, what a shocking, horrible thing it was that she should drink. Now that you know that her husband is the culpable person you seem to have quieted down suddenly. I don't see why. Are conditions not so bad as you thought them?"

"Men do drink, and of course it is a great pity they do, but somehow we are accustomed to it. It seems a more dreadful thing in a woman."

"Why should it?" inquired Mary. "A woman is less important than a man. Besides, a great many men make every allowance for such a failing in themselves, their friends and acquaintances—often it merely amuses them—so they ought surely to feel indulgent towards their wives in like circumstances. On the other hand, every nice woman is either disgusted, frightened or saddened (or all three) by the presence of a drunken man. It is seldom indeed she can see

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the joke of it—never when a man she loves is making a fool of himself. Jack Brown, there, is ruining his health and wasting his money. He is probably killing himself, and certainly breaking his wife's heart and meanly robbing her of all that could make life satisfying. He is one of those genial souls, 'nobody's enemy but his own'—and that of the woman who loves him. If *she* drank he might not mind it, might think it funny! Who can tell? But to her the worry of his drinking is—well, you saw her!"

"Still, everyone admits intemperance does seem more disgraceful in a woman than in a man," submitted I, somewhat driven.

"*I* do not," maintained she, stoutly. "If a woman takes to drink, as a rule there is much excuse for her. She is heart-broken, or gets into the habit through seeking relief from physical pain, or has lowered herself and seeks to deaden herself to the disgrace. It is nearly always some man's fault or she wouldn't do it. (Canadian women rarely have that failing, thank goodness!)"

"What about the men that are driven to drink 'all for love of a woman'?"

"Oh, nonsense!" ejaculated Mary, unfeelingly. "Do you think girls never fall in love, too, and can't get the man they want? They just have to get over it. Some of them may pine away—but even in such circumstances doctors are apt to call it consumption, dyspepsia, lack of stamina,

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and they don't get extra sympathy. From all one learns, a loving woman will submit to infinitely greater wrongs from a selfish and unprincipled lover, who turns his back upon her after she has given him her life, than man was ever called upon to bear at the hands of woman from unrequited love. And she'll just creep away and hide to try to escape people's scorn. You don't see *her* going around town drinking to drown her disappointments—and everyone making excuses for her and saying 'Poor fellow! A little wild and dissipated, yes, but he's been badly treated by a girl.'” (Certainly Mary is not exact in her figures of speech, but she conveys her meaning.) “Bah! I have come to the conclusion that if a man is going to drink he'll drink anyway, and find some excuse for it. If he's rich it's because he has too much money and idle time on his hands; if he's poor it's because he hasn't an hour for wholesome recreation and is worried to death to make ends meet. If he is a bachelor it's because the poor fellow has no home ties to restrain him—no loving wife waiting at home for him; if a married man, it's his wife and his load of family cares that drive him to it. If he is weak they will tell you he takes it because he cannot withstand temptation; if strong, he indulges because he knows it won't hurt him and he can give it up any time he likes. If he's young he takes it be—”

“But, Mary, Mary, don't be too sweeping!”

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interrupted I. "What about heredity? A man may have inherited a taste for alcoholic beverages and not be able to control his appetite."

"No doubt there are some such cases in both sexes," admitted she, "and they should be pitied and taken care of. For my own part I would as soon marry into cancer, consumption, or any other form of hereditary disease or insanity in the family, as hereditary drunkenness. It is as likely to come out sooner or later. At the same time it often strikes me as curious (when you hear this 'heredity' plea) that the taint does not seem to follow the girls of a family like it does the boys. All the sons of a family may drink like fish, and we find the daughters decent, sober women. How is that?"

"It may be they have more self-respect—people would be down on them—they know they could hold no social position. Perhaps they feel their brothers and husbands might not like it in them," I suggested, dryly.

"Yes, there's a good deal in that. If public opinion were just as much against men imbibing as it is against women doing so, and the weakness were looked upon as equally disgraceful in them, and they knew it, some of these hereditary ones might find strength to cast aside their inheritance and to stop it before they begin. That's my opinion."

There was conviction in her tone and she nodded her head emphatically.

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“Besides,” pursued she, “look how science and common prudence overcome tubercular tendency. Fresh air and wholesome food, take the patient away from unfavorable surroundings—and so on. If a man knows he is likely to develop a weakness for alcoholic stimulants, the idea should be to treat him for it, just as if his lungs were weak. Let him keep away from the saloon and where he would be tempted. Let him take an interest in wholesome pleasures and the duties of life. Give him nourishing food, and don’t let him get run down. We all admit that if a man with weak lungs sat in draughts, stood out in the rain, lived in low, damp surroundings, he would die, probably, of consumption. Whereas if he took all care of himself from the start he might spend a useful life and live to be ninety.”

“Yes, that is true enough,” I agreed. “And, to go further with your illustration, the drinking man is a menace to his neighbors—just as from the unfortunate patient disease may spread. By his influence and example he infects others who but for him might never have succumbed, but have been sober, steady citizens. The only difference is that while disease may at times conquer against our best endeavors, it is within human power to cope with the other evil—to stamp the liquor traffic out, with all its far-reaching miseries.”

We were silent for a space.

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“There is an immense amount of capital invested in breweries. There are a great number of people living in connection with stimulants,” commented I, meditatively.

“There would be plenty other work for people to turn to—business developments where capital could be invested beneficially to all. Why, it would pay the Government to set aside a fund to partially compensate those honest investors who might really suffer by the change. (Though if I chose to put my money in a company manufacturing something I knew to be harmful, and we were stopped, I don’t know who would compensate *me*.) The money it costs now to administer the liquor laws every year, to build and maintain prisons, hospitals, poor-houses, orphanages and asylums that are largely filled with alcohol’s victims, would go a long way towards evening up things. Some way of adjustment could be evolved if people put their minds to it. A few millionaires who are making more money than is good for them would be poorer, but the country itself undoubtedly would be richer at the end of a few years in all that goes to make a nation’s greatness. As it is, we spend millions on education, parks, playgrounds, pleasures for the people—and sanitariums—and consider it a good investment. The mass of the people are the ones to be considered.”

“Perhaps. But,” continued I, more lightly, “after all, Mary, a woman takes a man ‘for

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better for worse, for richer for poorer,' you know. Of course, she always fondly thinks it will be for better, and usually hopes it will be for richer. But if he happen to turn out worse instead of better, and poverty and bad days come, she must be a good wife and try to make the best of her bargain."

Mary was listening in a desultory way, but evidently mentally following some idea of her own, too.

"Do you know what I think about that wedding service?" commented she, looking up. "It should be altered. Being poor is a thing a woman must face bravely. If one's husband has smallpox or loses his leg or breaks his nose or goes blind, it's not his fault, and one should love him all the more—but if wives must endure drunken husbands (or *vice versa*) it should be incorporated in the marriage ceremony. If they made her promise to love, honor and obey 'for better for worse, for richer for poorer, for drunk or for sober,' she would then know what she was coming to. Until then I can sympathize with wives resenting their lots when their husbands choose to take to drink, and with their feeling a dissatisfaction, a weight of disillusion, sorrow and disgrace such as crushes our friend, poor little Mrs. Brown."

"I had no idea you felt so strongly on the subject of intemperance, Mary," said I, considering her.

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"Well, I do. All women who have had any experience of life—who look around them—feel strongly. They may not run and join the W. C. T. U., nor any of these A. B. C. D. E. F. G. societies; they may even not be in sympathy with some of the methods employed by extremists in the temperance cause. But if you can show me any thinking woman (there may be a few shallow, light-hearted fools who have never had it brought home to them) who would not be thankful to see every bar-room closed, every source of temptation to excess removed, I should like to meet the lady!"

Mary's words express merely the views of a warm-hearted girl of quick sympathies and some shrewdness who looks with seeing eyes upon the world around her—alive to the problems that beset humanity, conscious of the sorrows and anxieties encompassing many—though her own life is care-free and those she loves are all she could wish them.

But what of those poor creatures who have looked long with aching, hopeless eyes into the dark abysses of life; who have drunk deep of the bitter waters of disappointment, dread, despair; who strive to stay their starving souls by patient endurance and much forgiveness, where hope of the love and cherishing that had been their promised portion is far behind in the days of former things? What of the one-time

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proud and happy wives, secure in the love they fondly trusted as all that was manly, brave and tender, who in sorrow and humiliation have seen these attributes gradually disappear from their husbands' characters before the inroads of intemperate habits—wives who have borne ill-starred children, in what dejection and misery of mind and body only themselves can know—too often alone, as far as comfort and cherishing were concerned, when most they needed support and consideration? What of the mothers who have seen the sweet babies they nursed, the youths for whom later they fondly hoped great things, snatched up in a whirl of dissipation, or overmastered and lowered by that insidious appetite that numbs and deadens moral sense and kills ambition? What of the sisters whose unselfishness and pleadings have gone for naught; the daughters, anxious and shamefaced, where respect and honor should have been a worthy parent's portion? What of families disgraced and impoverished, of hungry children growing up to crime in squalid or blighting surroundings? What of the pitiable spectacle of helpless old age, destitute, forsaken, forlorn? And what of the wretched inebriates; brutalized, enslaved, bound with the fetters themselves have riveted, sinking ever deeper into a hell of their own making?

It happened not long ago that the heart of a woman was laid bare to me—a woman whom I

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had seen going her smiling way—rather delicate and at times making her health an excuse for the non-appearance of herself or husband where they were expected, but always apparently admiring and satisfied as far as he was concerned, and serenely unconscious of his heavy-eyed condition and the frequent lapses from sobriety which were plain to their acquaintances. Some of the younger women even said occasionally, “Somebody really ought to tell her,” but I have noticed older ones merely study her with quiet faces. We went to school together, but since her marriage a less degree of intimacy has been ours. She is a retiring, home-loving woman, devoted to her children. Hitherto she has taken no prominent part in associations, clubs, or even the good works that women undertake for charitable purposes. Therefore I heard with surprise the other day that she had come out boldly as an advocate of votes for women.

It was when I asked her about this, during an hour we spent together, that suddenly she cast aside reserve and spoke of all that had led to her adoption of the plea. And I write it down here, for, said she to me, “Make any use you like of my words. People will not know I am the one in your mind, and, for that matter, if my decision could be of any use in helping other troubled women to see and make use of a possible way out, I would gladly sacrifice my

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own feelings and openly speak of what is my conviction."

But that would do no good—nor would I dream of identifying her with her heart story.

"My husband drinks," said she, quietly. "You know it. I suppose everyone does know it, though I have tried my best to keep it hidden. (I could not bear pity. Until lately I have hoped against hope that he would yet give it up.) He drank before we were married, but I was not aware of it. His people did not tell me. If they had it might have been wiser, for he gave it up for a few months when we were first married, and had I known the danger of his sinking into the habit again I would have been prepared. Perhaps I might have had influence, while his love for me was fresh upon him, to have persuaded him to persevere in putting it aside. Looking back, I think he had it in his mind to put selfishness aside and to be the man I believed him. When he began taking spirits again I did not like to appear narrow or to curb his freedom. He began moderately. He assured me it was no real temptation to him, he could take it or leave it alone. 'Surely I would not wish him one of those temperance mollicoddles who would sit and drink water at a dinner.' He would be 'a man amongst men.' A woman is only too willing and proud to believe that her husband is strong and wise and to be trusted

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in all things. I hushed my fears. . . .
When I realized the danger it was upon us.

“I have heard uneducated working-women speak of ‘him,’ and maintain that he was a good man to them when he was sober. It used to seem so inconceivably pathetic—but I have come to understand! . . . My husband is by nature and education a man of refinement, breeding, ability. Honorable, generous-hearted, just to all, and tender as a woman to those he loved, his unselfishness and cheerful temper, his high courage and seeming strength of character, made him like a king amongst men to me. . . . But one drunken man is much the same as another. The qualities of intellect that elevate mankind above the brute creation are gone, the primeval savage shows through in one form or another. . . . He is better than many. . . . He doesn’t beat me. It may be because I never argue with him now when he is the worse for liquor. What is the use of reasoning with an insane creature? And when he is over it he forgets how he has acted and is nice to me again—and I haven’t the heart to be harsh to him, poor darling! You cannot understand that, I see, but when you are married you will understand better. . . . He is not by any means always drunk, but is scarcely ever really sober. I see the poison robbing him of ambition, self-respect, his sense of duty to those around him. He has deteriorated in every way—spirit-

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ually, mentally and physically—and is fast becoming the reverse of anything I would have chosen to marry. Yet in some unreasoning way he seems to think I should love and respect him as much as ever, and feels injured and abused at the loss of something he misses in my attitude towards him. He complains that the children turn to me instead of running to him with their little interests. I do love him still, but—ah me! To feel that something you thought to rest your heart on is not there! To realize what happiness and peace might be yours if he were only as God meant him to be, and to know yourself robbed of it by a rival so much harder to contend with than any human influence could be! To have expended every effort of tenderness, pleading, reasoning and indignation in vain!—It is bitter, bitter! The absolute loneliness of spirit, the consciousness of being in a way hampered and trammelled and bound by Fate—helpless to do aught but look on at the ruin of all that makes life worth living for any of us! It makes one desperate! Pray Heaven that you may never know from personal experience what it is to marry a drunkard!”

The force of her feelings had gradually mastered her, but presently she spoke again with composure that made no bid for pity—simply stated facts.

“It is hard for a refined, sensitive woman to have to sleep beside a sodden, snoring creature,

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reeking with the fumes of alcohol, and yet, after hours of anxious waiting, I have helped my poor, stupefied husband to bed when he staggered home, and thankfully crept close beside his fevered form—grateful for the mere animal warmth that soothed my shivering body and overwrought nerves—able to rest at last because I knew where he was. Often I was ill and suffering and in need of attention, but I might have died in the night and he would not have known it—he that is sympathy itself even yet if my head aches, when he is sober; though with a few glasses in him I admit he is most unsympathetic. He is neglecting his business and wasting his money—though that is the least part of it to me. My children will be beggars . . . and how can I train them as they should be trained? . . . He did love me. He would be all I desire still if the temptation (which he is not strong enough now to resist if he would) could be kept out of his way. His judgment is weakened, and this matter he cannot regard from a sane standpoint. He tells me he doesn't drink and that I am crazy on the subject. It would be amusing to listen to his impressive, lurching elaboration of dignity in denial of his obvious condition when he can scarcely speak, if it were not so heart-breaking—my own husband!"

I found no words to break the saddened pause that held her for a few moments. She roused herself.

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“And this brings me at last to the reason of my joining the Canadian Suffrage Association,” said she, returning to her ordinary voice and manner. “I have had to tell you how life looks to me, to explain my position. I want a vote. I want to go right back of all this nonsense of women’s societies for urging and approving moral reforms (good enough, certainly, in their way, but immature and futile—like ‘scotching the snake but not killing it’). I would secure for myself and other women the power of *doing* something, instead of all this empty talk, in dealing with the evils of the liquor traffic. I would have something tangible, that will carry some weight. There is at best so much suffering in the world that *must* be borne, that surely mankind will soon come to see the desirability of removing the great burden of sorrow, poverty and crime directly and indirectly laid upon humanity by the legalized trade in poison. I do not blame the poor creatures that make shipwreck of their lives. It is the legislation that is at fault. If universal suffrage prevailed, and all the present societies of women who in their hearts are in favor of temperance combined to uphold temperance candidates and measures, do you think it would take long to impress the legislators with the knowledge that they must act—and act quickly and firmly—to suppress the evil? Talk about the labor vote or the liquor vote, the women’s vote would be a power to sway where

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their hearts and homes were concerned!—and a great deal harder to round up by politicians. Even a few hundred votes would have a weight with Parliament that a petition half a mile long and signed by a million women under existing circumstances will never command. I cannot understand why the W. C. T. U. does not grasp the situation, realize the worth of a solid vote and work for *that*, instead of spending themselves in all this moral suasion alone. To be advocating Right is excellent, but, as some one says, Might behind Right is what will make things move.

“Women have begged, reasoned and implored on this subject of temperance long enough. My own appeals to my husband’s affection, better judgment, justice, manliness—my prayers to God that he might be shown the foolishness, selfishness and wickedness of drinking to excess and be turned from it to sane and worthy living—have seemingly gone unheard. But lately it has come to me (probably through the agency of those very prayers I thought unanswered—the answer to prayer comes in so many different ways!), it has come to me that the power to regulate these evils that distress us lies to our hand if we only knew enough to stretch out and grasp it—the possession of the franchise vested in women as well as men, and intelligently used for the betterment of humanity, the suppression of vice.

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So I shall advocate votes for women, as being the most likely and reasonable way of attaining social conditions that women desire."

I listened with surprise to the strong conviction and evidence of much thought that showed in her manner.

"For instance," illustrated she, presently, "if you saw one you loved (or even an entire stranger) taking something you knew to be poison, you wouldn't sit back and appeal to his love for you, or fall upon your knees and pray the Lord to convince him of the danger of the thing and strengthen him to resist temptation; or speak to someone to go and ask someone to see somebody influential about doing something sometime regarding the matter, would you? You might pray, to be sure, but also you would be up and doing. You would know he was in no condition to be judge of his actions. You would feel there was no time to waste in calling distant assistance. You would most likely dash forward and take the poison from him and put it where he couldn't get it—or put him where he could be cared for until he came to a saner mind, wouldn't you? And people would think you acted sensibly.

"The Lord helps those that help themselves. If the worried women whose husbands, brothers or sons drink, and fill their lives with misery and humiliation, the women who live through

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days of uncertainty and dread, who listen with strained senses far into the night—longing for, yet dreading, the sound of stumbling footsteps—thankful when they may lay them down to rest (?), at least knowing where the poor wretches are; if these women once realized that the franchise would give them opportunity to forward such legislation as would greatly lessen or remove the suffering caused by the present liquor traffic, I cannot think it would be long before their united voice would insist upon that right. It seems to me the way out. You may say that women are not all in favor of temperance, that some women drink. I know it. But in the main, women's influence is admittedly for the betterment of humanity. There is a great wave of temperance sentiment abroad in the world. Even China has awakened and is busily engaged in fighting the evils amongst her population—the greatest reform being that the consumption of opium has been forbidden. Men are realizing the necessity for the curbing of national evils, and an increasing number of our best citizens are working with that object in view. Let these men join in urging that women be given voting power, if they desire willing helpers to enable them to carry much-needed reforms. As it is, they gladly welcome our moral support. But are not women trying to make bricks without straw?"

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This is what she said. It seems to me that her contention is a reasonable and practical one. Her dignified self-control, her lack of idle bewailing, her simple statement of sad facts and of her search for some way of meeting and perchance overcoming the difficulties that beset her life, made a deep impression on me, and threw one more light upon the subject of woman's helplessness regarding conditions that most nearly concern her. A reserved, sensitive and proud woman suffers much before she lets the world see it. Many, like my friend, are enduring because they can see no way of curing. But education is abroad, and discredit should not attach to a sensible and progressive movement, because a few possibly ill-advised and militant exponents of the idea have brought ridicule upon their methods of securing attention. In every great movement there are those excitable ones who go to extremes—the froth, as it were, of the strong current that gathers volume and presently flows on smoothly. I can quite understand a quiet, sensible woman, with family interests, desiring the privilege of a vote for the one purpose only, and not caring to meddle otherwise in political issues. If the consensus of adult opinion is that the liquor laws are right as now in force, the fact of women having votes will make little difference in the matter.

If, as is stated by statisticians, one-third of

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the pauperism in Christian countries is due to alcohol; one-fourth of all the insane are victims of alcohol; two-fifths of the abandoned and neglected children have a right to blame alcohol for their plight; half the convicts and four-fifths of the inmates of our jails and workhouses were sent there by alcohol; if for every hundred victims of consumption the deaths due to alcohol mount into the thousands, it—well, it reminds one somewhat of famine, war and pestilence, does it not?

It has been said we cannot make men sober by Act of Parliament. Perhaps not. But certainly we can remove temptation from the path of the weak, and can see that our growing children are not inured to the sight and knowledge of approved trading in intoxicating drinks. It may be that those of the present generation who are determined to satisfy their appetites will always find some way of doing so—but the more difficult it is made for them the better for all. The next generation will grow up with a different outlook. Prevention is better than cure. The hole very often makes the thief. I notice that in the model prayer, “Lead us not into temptation” comes before “Deliver us from evil.” If a working-man had not to pass so many handsomely-appointed, warm, light and alluring establishments for dispensing alcoholic beverages on his way, there would be more likelihood of his reaching home with his money in

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his pocket and his intellect clear. A succeeding generation would not so easily fall into bad habits if less temptation lay about their path. Environment does more for us than heredity. The love of drink is an acquired taste, not a natural craving. Good food, wholesome pleasures, right surroundings, are the elements that nourish the human body, as earth, air and moisture develop the plant.

XV.

'T WAS EVER THUS.

You have seen those amusing—to the on-lookers—encounters between people who would have willingly altered their course to the extent of a block or two to avoid the necessity of not seeing each other had they perceived the approaching *bête noir* in time.

The other morning from my window I observed, on the other side of the way, two pretty matrons whom I had known as inseparable friends approaching from opposite directions. I expected to see them stop and speak, but to my surprise when Mrs. A.—perhaps we'd better call her—saw Mrs. B. coming she suddenly developed a vivid and absorbing interest in the contents of the nearest shop window (a flour and feed store), which necessitated her stopping to examine the objects displayed (a bag of flour and some oats and horse medicine) closely and carefully. At the same moment the attention of Mrs. B. was attracted by an express wagon in the road, which she scrutinized as earnestly as if she expected to recognize in the driver a personal friend, or to discover in the load one of her own trunks being surreptitiously conveyed

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to an illegal destination. That vehicle was of such consuming interest that she had eyes for nothing else. She was well past before Mrs. A.'s unusual concern in food for man and beast flagged and she was able to tear herself away from that fascinating window and resume her journey. Of course, if the attention of each had not been momentarily distracted they would have had to bow—or ignore each other. As it was they didn't happen to see each other, which was discreet and leaves ajar the door of a possible reconciliation.

"I thought Mrs. A. and Mrs. B. were bosom friends," said I to my friend when she came in later, "but they don't seem to be very gushing, judging from the wide berth they gave each other this morning. Do you know what the trouble is?"

"Oh, didn't you hear?" said Mary. "They took a summer cottage together this summer."

"Ah!" exclaimed I, comprehensively.

"Yes," went on she, "they live next door to each other in town, and have always been very intimate. Their husbands were great friends, too—grew up together, and all that, you know. Well, one day early this summer they took a trip out to Long Branch, and they were just charmed with the place. There happened to be a most desirable cottage to rent, and as their families were small and the cottage rather large

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they concluded that the very thing to do was to take it together. People hinted to them that it wouldn't do, they'd quarrel before the season was over—but they laughed the suggestion to scorn. To think that they, who knew one another so well and agreed in so many of their ideas and tastes, would not get on well together for a few short months! The idea was really too comical. So they took the cottage."

"And this is the natural result?"

"Wait till I tell you about it; it really is funny," said my friend, who doesn't like to have her stories shortened.

"They had very business-like arrangements. One would take her cook, the other a nurse—the housekeeping expenses would be shared equally. Part of the furnishings would be taken out by one family and part by the other. They would have a pony carriage and the use of a cow. The husbands could come into town together every morning and out again at night, and everything would be lovely."

"And when they had been out there a few weeks," continued I, as Mary paused to take breath, "they found out that their views about what was necessary for the table, for instance, were entirely at variance. Mrs. A.'s husband liked porridge and toast for breakfast, while Mr. B. expected beefsteak and hot rolls—and so on. Mrs. A.'s baby always cried when Mrs. B.'s

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infant had been at last coaxed to sleep. And when the A. baby slept after hours of fretfulness and its tired mother was thankfully resting, the B. children came shrieking and screaming under the window like little banshees and woke it up. Then Mrs. B.'s nurse utterly refused to have anything to do with Mrs. A.'s children, and the cook announced that she 'wasn't a-going to have no two missuses a-bossing her,' and presently left. Mrs. A.'s Willie developed a fondness for thumping Marjorie B. over the head with his sand-shovel—and Marjorie, defending herself with proper spirit and her tin pail, had to be corrected. A suspicion arose in Mrs. A.'s mind that a fair division of the cream did not fall to her family, and Mrs. B. considered it just a trifle thoughtless of the A.'s to invite so many visitors out from the city. The husbands heard the various tales of woe, and of course took no notice of them, but presently had a few words—over the horse or something of that kind, perhaps. About a month before they had intended returning to town, Mrs. A. found Mrs. B. so disagreeable that she gathered together all her things and left for home. This Mrs. B. deeply resented, and when they came to straightening out their housekeeping accounts before she went, the unpleasantness culminated in an open quarrel, and they never wish to have anything to do with each other again. That's about how it was, isn't it?"

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“Why, yes,” admitted Mary, in a puzzled way.
“But how did you know?”

How does anyone of observation know what happens when two families join forces on summering bent? Let the long list of broken friendships that is pasted in the scrap-book of one's memory answer. To my certain knowing, an island in Muskoka is the lonely grave of an affection that had cemented two families for years. It waned and died over who had the best right to the boat. Lake Simcoe's shores are haunted by the ghost of a dead friendship, a friendship that had lived and flourished through good report and evil and that time only strengthened—but it withered and perished miserably as the result of an unfortunate attempt its owners made to keep house together one summer. And don't I remember the young matron who for her baby's sake took a cottage on the Island and, being lonely, persuaded two school friends of hers and their widowed mother to share the house with her? They all might have known better. The little matron dreamed of quietness and peace and nothing to disturb the precious baby's rest. The girls naturally held views in which young men and laughter and singing and a banjo on the verandah in the evenings formed a prominent part. The butcher and baker and many things weakened the attachment between the friends, but it was the banjo, I think, that

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dealt its death-blow. Yes, experience points to the fact that the most elaborately-built and firmly-based structure of friendship is almost certain to topple and fall before the undermining effects of the many small annoyances encountered in the endeavor of two families to live under one roof.

XVI.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S ART.

"I HAVE had such a disappointment," Mary told me, dolefully, the other day.

"In what way?" inquired I, going on with my work. (Sometimes Mary's disappointments are serious, and then again they are not of sufficient magnitude to waste one's depth of sympathy upon—and you never quite know at first which kind she is airing.) "You have not been disappointed in love, I hope."

"Well, very nearly that. I've been bitterly disappointed in a lover, but," she went on after pausing a moment to thoroughly enjoy my startled glance, "fortunately not my own—he's Edith Mayne's lover. You remember when she was in Montreal last winter she got engaged, and we have been hearing of nothing but 'Tom's' perfections ever since. He's up here now, and to-day I met him."

"And don't you like him?"

"Oh, he seems a nice enough fellow—it's his appearance that gave me a shock."

"Why, I've seen his photograph and he seemed a very handsome man."

"That's just what I thought. But you remember the picture was only of his head and

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shoulders, and he wore a hat. My dear, his features are good enough, but he is only about five feet high, as broad as he is long, and has no hair on his head. I suppose Edith loves him and naturally thinks him beautiful—but I was not prepared, and it gave me a shock.”

“I believe she did tell us he was a trifle bald.”

“But if you could see his head! And yet the photograph is like him too. After this I’ll never put entire faith in the photographer’s version of any man.”

One does occasionally experience disillusion and surprises of the nature of Mary’s. Of all the arts the photographic art is perhaps the most artful, and the more artful the photographer the better he is considered. He tries to tell the truth—but it is not necessary to tell all the truth. Within his limitations it would, in fact, be quite impossible to give a full explanation of the matter in all its bearings. Then why not present to us a few pleasing facts, leaving the particulars to be filled out by the imagination?

He has discovered that people very rarely object to finding the presentment of themselves more pleasing than their mirrors would lead them to believe, so it is his aim to bury defects and bring out hidden beauties—to show us to the very best advantage. “Beauty is only skin deep” is not by any means a favorite maxim of

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his; he knows the fallacy of it. He searches deeper than that; he goes beneath the surface. And the plain girl with moderate features and worse than no complexion surprises us by her regular beauty, while her pretty pink and white, golden-haired sister appears to be a snub-nosed, washed-out individual with no eyebrows. That is the only thing I object to in the photographer. All his kind seem to have an unreasonable and undying hatred and prejudice as far as the fair girl is concerned, and with one accord utterly refuse to do her common justice. In the biased eye of the camera she is evidently a very different-looking creature from what she is in the eyes of the general public. I'm sorry for the fair girl; she is wronged.

Sometimes when an acquaintance whose charms are not visible to us by the naked eye beams out in smiling beauty from the card, we are tempted to doubt the truthfulness of the artist's "version," as Mary designates it. But then we all know how much depends upon the light in which you consider any subject—the point of view you take. To the photographer's credit we must admit that he generally takes a very charitable view, and the best obtainable light being a requirement of his, naturally—well, a good many somewhat unattractive subjects are seen at their best.

Now and then, however, you meet with a man who seems to take an inhuman joy in adorning

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your pictured form with monstrous and unique features that really are not yours—bulging nose or crooked mouth, exaggerated hands or uncommon feet. He is generally met with in rural districts, and you can escape him by remaining near the centres of civilization.

I don't for a moment blame a bald man for suppressing the fact by being pictured in his hat, or a woman with a double chin for raising her face until the objectionable appendage disappears; and it is not the fault of a red-haired man that you conclude from his picture that he is very dark, and are amazed upon meeting him to discover that he has a geranium-colored beard. Not at all. But after a few surprises of this kind the imaginative mind is apt to dwell upon possibilities. You may find yourself speculating, when you go through an album of unknown people, as to whether the girl with long eyelashes who is sentimentally gazing down at a flower in her hand does it to show the luxuriance of her strong point or because she has a cast in her eyes. You wonder if that fine-looking man in profile has too generous and widespread ears to be taken full face. A fear comes to you that possibly the handsome woman gazing straight at you, might develop an enormously prominent or turned-up nose did she turn her face. You are haunted by an uneasy dread that the pretty girl who turns her dainty head, seemingly to attract attention to the shape of a

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particularly graceful neck, may have a mole on her other cheek—or only one eye. And really since “Tom’s” figure has turned out so badly, I begin to find myself always wondering, when shown a handsome head and shoulders, what disappointment lurks in the rest of the man—if his legs may be short and semi-circular or his toes turned in.

But blessings on the photographer, he can stay the hand of Time. Wrinkles and crowsfeet he obliterates with ease. The removal of ten obnoxious years is as nothing to him. He has been known to fill out the hollows of waning cheeks. And freckles are as the morning mist before the sun of his retouching power.

XVII.

ONE KIND OF GIVING.

"DEAR me!" said Mrs. Giventake, "how time flies! To think of Christmas being only about a week off! And a hundred and fifty things one ought to attend to before then, too. I'm that busy I don't know which way to turn. Are you giving many Christmas presents this year?"

"Well, not as many as usual; I really can't afford it, and it always seems to me that this empty giving of presents just because people expect it of you and it's the custom is a mistake. I think present-giving should be the spontaneous outpouring of affection or gratitude, and not a tax levied on us by the season, an empty exchange of compliments," returned Mrs. Samy, in the tone of one who realizes the weakness of surrounding humanity.

"Just exactly what I think and what I've often said! You know, I cannot understand this business-like idea of giving just to see what you'll get in return—like some people do. I don't see how they can be so mercenary."

"Nor I either. I couldn't do it. The calculating, mean spirit some people show in bestowing their gifts where they will bring most return is abominable. There's Mrs. Grabber; I met her down-town to-day buying an expensive

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dressing-gown for that rich old uncle of hers. She'd have done better to give it to her brother-in-law who has been ill so long—I hear they are just starving—but he couldn't give her anything, and she expects old Money-bags to substantially remember every child in her family. If he were as mean as John's uncle it's very little they'd get from him. He's the one that knows how to hang on to his coppers! He hardly ever gives the children a thing at Christmas—and we all give him nice presents every year. Not that I'm mercenary, you know; but it's only sensible to please him if one can. He could do so much for the boys; and he'll have to leave his money to someone before many years are past. Old curmudgeon! I'd a good deal rather spend the money on poor old grandpa, he's so fond of my children. But then it's no use talking, you can't do everything—and grandpa knows we all love him."

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Giventake, regretfully, "it seems too bad that one can't afford to give to everyone one would like to do something for. There's poor old Cousin Jane, she's been awfully good to me. I send for her first thing when any of us are sick, and she always will take charge of the children if I want to go anywhere, or help me out with the sewing. I wish I could give her something really nice, but I don't see how I can. There are so many people one is obliged to remember. That five-o'clock tea cover

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for my husband's mother has cost me ever so much more than I thought it would—she gives me so many handsome things I have to give her something really nice—and my sister's children get such a number of lovely gifts from their father's people that we have to spend a lot of money on them or they don't think anything of what you give them. Spoiled youngsters they are! So different from Mary's children. A few cheap toys will satisfy them. It's just struck me I'll give Jane that plaid dress length my mother-in-law gave me two years ago (I wish she had better taste). I'll never wear the ugly thing, and it will make Jane a nice, serviceable dress—it's a pity green doesn't suit her better, but I can't help that. It will be a good, handsome present." And she gave a little sigh of satisfaction in the settlement of that question.

"What are you going to give your husband, Mrs. Giventake?"

"I'm not quite sure," responded that lady, doubtfully. "I wish I could be quite certain what he intends giving me. I've been hinting for the last six months that I want a new dinner-set, but men are so obtuse. If I could be sure of the dinner-set I'd give him a shaving-stand, for I've quite a lot of money saved up, and it would look nice in the room; but I must have the dinner-set, and if he isn't going to get me one I'll have to buy it myself and pretend it's a present for him. I'm bound to have it anyway."

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"That's a good idea," laughed Mrs. Samy, "but it is so annoying," she went on more gravely, "that one doesn't know beforehand. Now last year I was as sure as sure that John intended giving me a new black silk, so I got him a pair of gold sleeve-links and a new muffler. And would you believe it! The mean fellow had nothing for me but a rocking-chair. I was that disappointed I could have cried. I'll be even with him this year, though; I'm just going to get a new hat-rack for the hall and pretend it's a handsome present for him to use hanging his hat and coat on. The rocking-chair, indeed! We needed it for the sitting-room anyway. I do hate people to get you something useful or that they want themselves—all the time letting on it's a present for you."

"Yes," assented Mrs. Giventake, dreamily, her mind evidently yet dwelling upon the dinner-set. "Do you know, I'm almost sure he'll get it, and I would like to give him some nice handkerchiefs and a new umbrella. I suppose," with the air of one to whom a bright idea has occurred, "I could have the umbrella sent home the day before Christmas, and then if the dishes didn't materialize I needn't say anything about it, and send it back on Saturday to change for something else for myself."

"Are you going to have many for dinner on Christmas day?" presently asked Mrs. Samy.

"Yes, the whole crowd. Isn't it a nuisance?"

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That's the worst of marrying into a large family. I don't mind my own people, but John insists on having his relations this year. There will be sixteen altogether, and my cook's raging. I'll have to give her nearly everything there is in the house to keep her in a decent temper or she'll burn the turkey or have a sick mother and have to go home. I suppose Christmas will be a great day for you, too."

"No, thank goodness! We're all going to my sister's. She hates entertaining, but she has a large house and there is nothing to prevent her, so she hasn't the face to wiggle out of it this year, as mother is staying with her. If I had everything I wanted, like she has, it would be a pleasure to entertain. Of course, with only one servant and such a small house I am differently situated, and I really can't do it"—and so on.

But enough of the business-like and calculating exchange of presents and dinners which, to some few to whom Christmas is but an empty sound, passes muster as being the giving of gifts and dispensing of hospitality.

The only true giving is done from love or compassion, and without the least thought of return. Yet when did the outflowings of generosity and unselfishness, tender consideration and compassion for our less fortunate brothers, forgiveness and kindly feelings towards those who may have injured us, fail to bring into our hearts the

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return tide of sweet satisfaction and content? You that have a plenty of this world's goods, take from your hoard and purchase for yourselves, by providing for the needs of others, a happiness, a comfort, an internal glow that will warm you mayhap through cold and dreary days of advancing age and loneliness.

A season of joy and gladness! A time of feasting and mirth! Think of the many within touch of our hands upon whom the burden of sorrow or want or care presses heavily. Think of the Christmas dinners that will choke the narrowed circles, where Death has been busy since the last anniversary, that vainly strive to partake in cheerfulness. Think of those other dreadful abodes that the gaunt fingers of poverty have robbed of all semblance of a home, where miserable children cry for food and old age huddles trembling by the fireless stove. You that don your furs—glad that suitable weather has come in which to wear them—think how the bitter winds penetrate the ragged garments of many that are homeless and destitute; of more that, buttoning up their thin coats over breaking hearts, are bravely trying to hide their poverty and, well-nigh desperate, are facing a world that seems filled with disappointment and misery and want. And if we can aid in ever so little, by material assistance or sympathy or encouragement, let us not hold back, remembering the life-long self-sacrifice of Him whose birth we celebrate.

XVIII.

FREDDIE'S CHRISTMAS.

It was the evening of Christmas Day. Mother's friend—a complimentary aunt—had come in, and in the absence of Sarah had undertaken to put Freddie and May to bed while mother struggled with the baby.

This was generally an easy matter, as Aunt Eva was in high favor with them. But to-night they were a bit fractious. Christmas had been too good to them. They had eaten too much and been given too many toys and had had too much excitement. So they were cross and sleepy and tearful and determined not to go to bed, and firmly convinced that someone was abusing them in some way. May said she was hungry and wanted more candy and a piece of cake; and Freddie stoutly maintained that he would not allow himself to be disrobed until Sarah came home, both accompanying their asseverations by disconsolate wailings.

By judicious argument Aunt Eva succeeded in overcoming Freddie's objections to changing his attire in the absence of the gone-to-a-party Sarah, and with more difficulty persuaded the already surfeited May that a drink of water was all the nourishment she really required at pres-

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ent and that the cake had better be deferred until morning. Fortunately this chubby personage succumbed to sleep before she was quite convinced, and, still closely hugging a particularly ugly doll, was laid in her cot.

"She never said her prayers! Wake her up again!" expostulated Freddie, who evidently was in a frame of mind to thoroughly enjoy such a proceeding.

"She was so sleepy and tired she just forgot. I think we'll let her off to-night. You might say them for her."

"No, I won't, you greedy thing!" indignantly returned he. "And I won't say my own either, because she didn't!"—this with a clear intention of stirring up strife. But Aunt Eva is fairly wise and put off discussing the matter till such time as his views should modify. After a little soothing conversation this came to pass and he also was tucked in, accompanied by a wooden gun and an uncomfortably lumpy train of cars.

But sleep came not to him, and as he displayed a violent antipathy to being left alone she remained beside him, compromising on being allowed to turn the gas down slightly. He said he didn't want it turned very low because it made him remember the nigger mask with the big eyes and mouth that Uncle Jack brought him. Not that he was afraid of it, he hastened to assure her, for mother told him when he cried it couldn't hurt him, and some day he was going

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to put it on and yell and scare all the other boys—only the dark somehow made him think of it. Realizing that escape would not be hers till he was ready, and not wishing to be called upon for a story, she encouraged him to narrate the events of the day.

“Tell me all about your presents, and what you did to-day.”

“Well,” began Freddie, who by this time had forgotten his grievances and was disposed to look upon life in a more sunny light, “we had a lovely time, and I’m so tired I can’t go to sleep,” and he sighed contentedly.

“Did you hang up your stocking last night?”

“Why, of course we did—and got up awful early, before it was light, to see what was in them. May fell getting out of bed and began to cry, and we woke the baby, and got cold running around before the furnace was shaken, and mother said, ‘Get into bed, you naughty children; you’ll take your death of cold.’ We couldn’t see what Santa Claus had brought us, but we felt them all over, and took some nuts and oranges and candy into bed with us and ate them and talked. The nutshells got all over the bed and were prickly; and chocolate drops are so soft, aren’t they? There was a good loud bugle in my stocking, too, and May had a mouth-organ. When I got tired of the bugle we changed. I like a mouth-organ, it blows in and out—and you have to stop a bugle while you take breath.

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By and by it got light, and May could see her doll and I found out how my train of cars worked. I couldn't tell before whether I'd have to pull them with a string or they'd go themselves. May let one doll drop, and its head came off, and she cried. She's only a little thing, you know. I never cried when my Noah's ark fell, and one side came off the roof and all the animals ran round the room. I think they might have made the elephant's head on tighter—and Noah's arms!"

"Did they come off?"

"Yes, but papa says he can glue them on again, perhaps. Did you see my red fireman's cap and the hose reel? I was just hoping I'd get one. Now I can play fire!"

He stopped a moment to contemplate the delights the future holds for him. I hope his father is well insured.

"By and by Sarah came and dressed us and we all had breakfast. Then all sorts of lovely things came from our uncles and aunts, and the postman had five letters for mother, and she paid him fifty cents for them."

"I wish he'd bring me five letters."

"Well, you pay him some money and he will, perhaps.

"Then we went to church, and it was so pretty, all green trees and berries and flowers—only when the organ played there was only one lady sang. She sang so loud she made my head ache,

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and then a gentleman with a black beard began to help her, and when the organ had nearly done playing all the choir began to sing. Why didn't they sing all the time instead of standing doing nothing? I was going to ask mother but I forgot."

After his listener had explained this phenomenon he continued:

"Then we all went to grandma's for dinner—not the baby, of course. I like going to grandma's. She has such nice things and lets you have everything you want. I ate an awful lot of plum pudding, and May burnt her mouth with the mince pie. There were a lot of people there. After dinner my cousin George—he's a big man, you know, with a moustache—was in the littlest drawing-room near some red berries by the window, and he kissed that pretty lady they call Miss Martin. She said, 'Oh, don't!'" but he didn't mind a bit and did it again. I happened to be in there and I asked him why he did it, and he gave me ten cents to go and put in my new bank. I think George is nice, don't you?"

"After we got home May was nasty and cross, and wanted my drum, and cried because I pretended her doll was an enemy and cut off its head with my sword. When I'm big I'm going to be a soldier and kill people dead, and have a gun forty times as big as this one. Well, she cried, and I hit her and she hit me, and mother was so cross and put the sword away. And the baby

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sucked the paint off Noah and nearly swallowed May's new ring, and cried and cried and cried when I wouldn't let him have my new rubber ball. And mother said she was tired out, and I cut my finger dreadful with my pen-knife Uncle Bob gave me—it didn't look a bit sharp—and May rocked over in her new little rocking-chair and hurt her head, and then we had tea and you came."

He was getting a bit sleepy, and the toys were unadaptable bedfellows.

"I think," said he, drowsily, "you'd better put the cars on the floor, but leave my gun on top of the pillow. I like it best of all—and May likes her rag doll with the wool hair."

"You seem to have had rather a lively day with the children, from Freddie's description," commented Eva as she rejoined her friend, who had by this time succeeded in pacifying the baby.

"Lively! a regular song and dance from five this morning. Poor little souls, I want them to be happy, but as I said to Will to-day, children get far too many toys nowadays. It's waste money. They only break and destroy them in no time, and if they are expensive it annoys you, and the people who gave them are disappointed when they come two days after and find them in fragments; and if you put them away what good are they? Freddie thinks more of his wooden gun than of all the handsome things his

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aunts and uncles gave him, and May passes over expensive toys in favor of that hideous rag doll. Children don't recognize the value of things. A tin toy is as likely to please them as extravagant things that only get out of order."

"Listen to Freddie talking in his sleep!"

"Yes, I expect I'll have a night of it! Their grandmother let them have a taste of everything on the table, and May's stomach is so delicate. They've had nuts and candy and fruit, and I wouldn't be surprised if the baby has been swallowing whole raisins when I wasn't looking. It would be awful if he took convulsions, wouldn't it!" and a look of anxiety overspread her tired face. "When I was young we had some apples and nuts and two or three simple toys amongst us at Christmas, and I believe we thought more of them and were far happier."

XIX.

MOVING DAY.

FROM that evil day when Adam and Eve moved out of their first home, moving day has been generally conceded to be a time of dreariness and discomfort, a season of misery and despair.

There are admirable women to whom the cares of a household are admittedly a delight; I have met energetic and bustling souls who look upon housecleaning as a yearly recreation; I understand there are men who don't object to occasionally lending a hand with the carpets, and children who are charmed to take their meals round the kitchen table while painters and paper-hangers are in possession of the halls and dining-room—but where is the man, woman or child that thoroughly enjoys the commotion, disorder and general cheerlessness of moving? Our first parents were not troubled with household effects. There was no kitchen stove to wrest from its moorings and again set up—Eve hadn't even a trunk to pack—and we have it on the best authority that even they found moving a most unpleasant experience. To succeeding generations, burdened with goods and chattels, distracted with uncomfortable and wailing children, with thoughts of packing and breakages and losses

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heavy on their minds, no wonder it still has terrors.

Perhaps for the very wealthy things are smoothed—though valuable possessions lead to anxiety of mind—but for the many who cannot afford to take a nice little trip and come back when everything is comfortably set to rights, but have to be in the midst of the fray and bear a hand themselves, the thought of moving is connected with all that is miserable.

We used to own a gigantic old sofa that was the despair of the men who handled it. It was about eight feet long, guiltless of castors or springs, and mahogany must have been no object when it was built. The original leather covering had given place to many succeeding materials; the round bolsters, that I remember figuring as most useful weapons of defence when the sofa was used as a fort in many youthful battles, had succumbed to much belaboring of the attacking foe; the hair stuffing was peering out at many corners. An entirely disreputable-looking old object it was, but the family loved it as an old friend—though the men who staggered beneath its weight when we came to move thought light of the piano in comparison. It was an heirloom. We have moved several times, so perhaps it is as well that our heirlooms are few. Solid ways had our ancestors. Modern ideas of limited space, or narrow halls, or the desirability of being able to move things easily

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so as to sweep underneath them, evidently didn't enter into their calculations. The sofa is now but a memory. Many movings finished even it. Personally I don't regret it, but its end illustrates the capacity for destruction possessed by the furniture van and its retinue.

If one might have a bonfire in the back yard and burn up all the rubbishy things that accumulate and the articles that are old and ugly or awkward to handle, and replace them with pretty new things, it would not be so bad. We have a great deal of stuff that I have no affection for—it would be a joy to me to watch it burn—but I feel sure, if we moved, it would all have to be taken with us again. This thing would be “too good to destroy,” and that “we might need sometime”—and we'd take it all, down to the heavy, old-fashioned wardrobe that, refusing to adapt itself to the requirements of a winding staircase, had to be hoisted up through the window by ropes, and the broken chairs that are stored in the basement.

Then all sorts of inconvenient and unexpected things occur, besides the regular course of disagreeables that forms the necessary basis of a fitting. For instance, when Mary was in the other day she was telling me dolefully of a little experience of hers.

Last week her people moved. While their household goods were about equally distributed between the dismantled home-that-had-been and

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the house that was to be their future abode, Mary happened to be left in charge of the latter "between the loads." During her tenure of office the man from the waterworks department came to turn on that necessary element. Having announced himself, he inquired if things were "all right to turn the water on"—to which usual inquiry Mary, having closed all the obvious taps, guilelessly answered "Yes." The man then performed his mission, and, being rather in a hurry, took himself away quickly.

Mary watched him and his long key disappear down the street, and a whimsical fancy came to her that this official's divining-rod is the only true and infallible indicator of where water is to be found. You see him walking unconcernedly along. Suddenly he stops before a house whose inhabitants require his good offices. The divining-rod turns to a most unlikely-appearing place—the conjurer has found the spring. And is he mistaken? Never. That man is a wizard. He can poke around beneath the driest-looking sidewalk and presently, in some mysterious way, a gush of water responds to the magic touch—and there you are. He's a marvellous man!

Mary was still standing at the door thinking thus, she told me, when there reached her a sound as of running water, and she hastily turned towards the kitchen to take another look to reassure herself that all was tight. The

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kitchen stove had not yet been attached to the hot-water tank, and from this water was pouring in a lively stream. Now Mary is not noted for presence of mind, neither does she commonly inquire deeply into the reason of things. It is enough for her that throughout a house the taps to the right hand bring forth cold water and those to the left give you warm—she has no curiosity regarding the place of the pipes or anything of that kind. Of course she presently realized that there must be a way of turning the flow from the boiler, a tap somewhere, but after a hurried search couldn't find it. I must let her describe her experience in her own words.

“I tried to stuff the hole up, but things wouldn't stay in, and the water was into the dining-room by this time. I had the presence of mind to open the door and let it run down to the cellar. Then I put a tub under the thing. But when I thought that the whole reservoir was behind that flow—and the lake behind that—I grew desperate and ran out to the street and clutched the first creature I could find. He happened to be a plumber's assistant that was passing—wasn't it funny? ‘Can you swim?’ cried I, frantically. ‘Come in and help me! I'm drowning!’

“He looked surprised at my remarkable assertion, but evidently thought that I was a person that ought to be looked after in any case, so followed me. When he saw the trouble he just

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took two steps over the floor and turned a thing that was hidden in some foolish place round by the wall and the water stopped."

"You certainly had quite an exciting time," commented I. "What did the rest of them say when they came?"

"Oh, they were disgusted. Mother said I ought to have had the waterworks man come in and see that everything was right before he went—but I never thought. And Jack says I was a regular ninny not to know how to fix the tap myself—and lots of things are spoiled—and the cellar's flooded—and—but I don't care, I'm not a plumber, and how was I to know? I never saw a boiler without a stove on before—and never want to again, for that matter."

"But, Mary," I called her back to say, as she was going, "but, Mary, you know where that tap is now, don't you, and what it's for?"

"Yes, I know," returned Mary, in a vindictive voice.

XX.

HIS SUPERIOR MIND.

THE superior young man was entertaining me while his sister, with whom he was going out to spend the evening, was dressing.

He's a nice boy, though at times a little oppressive. He's just at that age when there seems a definite satisfaction to be derived from referring to himself as "a man." A misty shadow about his mouth is respectfully recognized—by himself—as quite an imposing moustache, though perhaps it is because he is not quite certain of it yet that he has to reassure himself so often by the sense of touch. He has lately taken up his position amidst an admiring circle of feminine relatives as the man of the house, and is conscientiously trying to live up to it. He belongs to two clubs, undertakes to lecture his sister and judge for his mother; but there is good stuff in him, and when he is old enough to be not feeling quite so old he will be a very satisfactory young man.

"I wonder if Mary will be ready soon. You'd think her hair would be curled by this time," he remarked presently.

I reminded him that a girl's toilet was a very different thing from throwing on a dress suit.

"But what a fuss girls do make about their

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clothes anyway," said he, as one who speaks from a height. "Men are not like that. You know what I mean! Now Mary, she's always talking about what she'll wear and how she'll have it made. It's 'Do you like my hat, Jack? I trimmed it myself,' or 'How do you think this shade of blue suits me?' or 'Is my hair all right?' They talk for hours about how the dressmaker spoiled some frock (As long as a dress is a pretty color and nothing out of the way about it, who knows how it's made? I'm sure I don't), and they wear high heels and tight things that hurt them, just because it's the fashion." Here he paused a moment to pass his fingers round inside of his very high collar, which seemed to be rather troubling him—"And they keep patting their bangs into place and pulling their veils down and arranging their ribbons. Oh, you can see it's on their minds—even when they talk of other things."

"What's on their minds?"

"Their appearance—how their clothes fit, and things like that. Not that I blame them for it, you know. I suppose they haven't much else to think of." And the young man smiled indulgently as he rearranged his tie at the mirror over the mantel and gave his hair a smoothing touch.

"That's it," said I, "their minds are not taken up with great matters, business and politics and—and yacht races and things."

"Eh?"

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“And naturally dress is a very important matter to them, poor things! A man has other things more important than his appearance and the fit of his clothes to claim his attention.”

It may be that he suspected my too agreeable acquiescence, for he veered off and began talking of other things.

But I saw there was something on his mind. “By the way,” inquired he, presently, with a fine air of indifference, “what do you think of the fit of this coat?” (We are old and intimate friends.) “I think it’s about right, don’t you?”

I said I was not much of a judge of a coat, but it looked very nice; was it a new one?

“Why, yes,” returned he, in disgusted tones. “Do you mean to say you don’t see any difference between this and the old thing I got when I was half-grown? Why, it was bursting off me! See, this is lined with silk and the collar’s different and the tails are longer. A man feels something like in a suit like this.” And he shook himself into shape, strutted down the room and, standing before the looking-glass, struggled to get a good view of his back. “It seems to me there is the least little wrinkle between the shoulders yet,” he complained in a dissatisfied way, “and I had it back to the tailor three times—I was determined to have a good fit. When a man has a decent figure any tailor that knows his business ought to be able to make his coat fit him like a glove.”

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"What does it matter—a coat's a coat? So long as it's black and there is nothing extraordinary about it, who's going to notice?" said I, unfeelingly.

"Oh, you think you're very clever, don't you? But I tell you a coat is very different from a dress. However, we won't quarrel about it. The trousers are a decent cut anyway, that's one comfort. I don't much care for these shoes," as his eyes travelled down to his feet; "but all the fellows are wearing them, so I had to get them, too."

By this time he had wandered back to the glass and was absently taking another look at himself.

"Do you like these collars, lapping in front, better than those with turn-down points? They're not nearly so comfortable, but I believe they're the very latest thing. Mary thinks they suit me; do you?"

Mary appeared about that time and we did not continue the conversation, but I'm thinking my friend's brother shows at least a wholesome interest in his own attire.

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THEY were spending a sociable hour together and had pretty well gone through the list of their acquaintances.

"How do you like your new minister?" presently inquired Mrs. Tawker.

"Oh, I like him very well," returned her friend, with the accent on the "I," and a tone that gave the hearer to infer that there were "others."

"What is it that they don't like about him?" asked the other, with interest.

"I didn't say he wasn't liked. He is a well-meaning man, no doubt, and I really believe he tries to do his best. He came to see us and was as attentive and kind as anyone could be when John was sick. But there's no use talking, the poor man can't preach! He gives us such dry, prosy old sermons people won't be bothered listening to him. If he'd take some subject of public interest and preach a good rousing sermon on street-cars or voting or motoring or something like that, the church would be well filled. In fact, I up and told him so one day, for you know I really like him."

"And what did he say?"

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"Oh, talked something about his duty being to deliver the message of salvation, or something like that, and not just to draw a crowd by being sensational. The idea! Who wants him to be sensational? But look at the Rev. Mr. Howlanthumpit's church—they say you can hardly get in at night?"

"Is he the one that preached about millinery and morals last Sunday?"

"Yes," assented Mrs. Tawker, hurriedly. "I don't know that I altogether like everything he does, and they do say he's not much of a visitor, and wants to run everything just in his own way. But see how he fills the church. People go from all over to hear him."

Her friend nodded.

"You know, one thing I can never understand," said she, presently, "is why any man cannot give a good sermon when he has all week to prepare it in. It seems to me if I tried I could preach better myself than some of these sticks that get up in a pulpit."

"Such as your curate, for instance, eh?"

"Our curate! Oh, don't mention him! He doesn't often preach, thank goodness! he makes me that nervous I feel like helping him out."

"They say he's very good in the Sunday-school."

"Oh, yes! he's a great worker, I believe, and the children quite dote on him. He goes about amongst the poor a great deal, and one of the

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teachers in the Sunday-school was telling me that sometimes when he gets interested in his subject and forgets himself he becomes almost eloquent. I don't see why he need be nervous when he gets up to preach. It's not as if we were all criticising him."

"Well, your clergyman is a good speaker himself, so it doesn't so much matter."

"Do you really like his preaching? I never can tell what people find to admire in his sermons. We'd leave the church to-morrow only that all the people we know go there and there's no other nice church near."

"There's that new church. Don't you like the service there?"

She held up her hands.

"They're the greatest beggars under the sun! Never go to a new church. It's always they want to furnish this or get that. If it isn't paint or carpet it's the organ fund or Sunday-school library. They're never done."

"It's the same in every church," returned Mrs. Tawker. "They're always begging. It does seem that there is something wrong about the whole system. As my husband says, he doesn't mind doing his fair share; but let other people do the same! There are lots in our congregation that could give and never feel it. Now, we have a family dependent on us, and it takes so much to dress a lot of girls like I have! I don't think we ought to be expected to do very

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much. I'm sure whenever they get up a concert or bazaar or social, my girls help. They had great fun out of those theatricals last winter, and made quite a bit of money—though, of course, after the expenses came out of it there was not so very much left for the interest fund. You belong to the Woman's Auxiliary, I suppose?

"Yes, I used to be vice-president of our branch, but I didn't like the way things were run. There were a few there that wanted things their own way, and I had hardly a say in anything. I'm sure I'm not one to put myself forward, but one doesn't like to be ignored entirely. Our clergyman's wife has no tact at all, either. I don't like to say anything against her, but really, you know, she isn't at all fit for her position."

Mrs. Tawker nodded comprehendingly.

"I know. No management or good sense—treats everyone alike—doesn't seem to understand the different grades of society in the congregation. Of course, in theory all men are equal; but you know well enough people will not mix up together, and it's no use trying to make them."

"Of course not. Why, she actually wanted me to go and call on those people that moved to our street last spring. She seemed a nice enough little woman when I met her down at the church, but I didn't know a thing about

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them—so I didn't go. I hear she said we were a stiff, unfriendly lot, and has left the church and gone to the Methodists; but I'm sure I can't help it."

"Oh, well," remarked Mrs. Tawker, disapprovingly, "I say that anyone that only joins a congregation to get into society is not much of a loss if she did leave."

"I think so, too—but I didn't finish telling you about those sewing-meetings. You know those Munnys. Well, the girls joined the W. A. And the airs of them! It was sickening. They'd know you at the meetings and be quite talkative and friendly, and you'd meet them on the street and perhaps hardly get a bow. We moved next door to them, and—would you believe it?—they never called! That just about settled me. I think when we are all working for a good object it's only decent to be sociable and friendly."

"Yes, indeed! Now, when we first went to the church we attended before this I joined all their societies and did a lot of work, thinking we'd meet some nice friends, but hardly anybody called—except a few common sort of people I didn't want. So I just didn't return their visits. I thought the minister's wife might have had more sense than to send them."

"Speaking of ministers' wives, how do you like the way Mrs. Goodman, your clergyman's wife, dresses?"

"Dresses! She doesn't dress at all, she only

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covers herself. I know his salary is not very large, but she might get herself a new bonnet once in two years. I believe ministers' wives like to be dowdy. I'm sure it's not all the visiting she does takes up her time. She hasn't been in my house for three months past."

"Her children are young, and she's not very strong, poor thing! Besides, they have a great many coming and going in a minister's household—so perhaps we ought to make some excuse for her."

"That's all very well, but look at the simple way they live! Visitors make no difference to them. It's not as if they had to keep up appearances like other people. When you go there to tea, about all you get is stewed apples and bread and butter. As for her children, they're as badly behaved as any family I know. I can't understand how their father allows it. You naturally expect something more than ordinary from a clergyman's family."

Truly a good many people do seem to expect something more than ordinary from the minister and the minister's wife and the minister's family. Mary says she thinks so, too. Well for them if they can live up to the high standard of excellence raised for them by a watchful congregation. But stay! Was it ever done? I scarcely think so. Many a self-sacrificing Christian man has passed through this life so perform-

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ing his duty and ordering his steps as to please his God—but who ever heard of one who succeeded in satisfying every member of his flock? But then the Lord knows the natural frailties and shortcomings of human nature, and probably expects far less of His servant than the congregation do.

It may be that I have wrong ideas on the subject, but it seems to me that any Christian, humbly doing his duty and earnestly endeavoring to walk in the footsteps of our great Example, ought to live as good a life as a clergyman—only that the latter may be more learned in some ways and is set apart for the definite purpose of guiding his brothers who may be blinded by this world's brightness, burdened by its cares, or ignorant of the way to the haven he can see more clearly than they. Cast down and disheartened he is apt himself to become—wearied of urging on the travellers who would fain turn aside and rest in perilous places, heedless of the oncoming night—tired of the dusty highway of life and casting wistful glances at the green coolness of careless ease that lies so invitingly beside the way—hungry for words of approbation and encouragement. What of it if he should faint by the way—or even swerve aside momentarily—so that presently he sets his feet more firmly in the narrow path, fixes his eyes more steadfastly on the Guiding Light and, hold-

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ing closely to the Supporting Presence, plods on to the end of the way?

It is not given to every man to be brilliant—but who shall say that platinum has no value because it does not shine like gold? There may be great worth of usefulness hidden under an unpretentious exterior. Far from me be it to affirm that there are many church members like our two gossips. I know there are numbers who uphold and strengthen their pastor's hands; still there are, here and there, those who by their thoughtless and unkind criticism hamper and hinder honest effort, and are stumbling-blocks to many.

XXII.

THE MINISTER'S WIFE.

"THAT was not a bad article you were reading me a couple of weeks ago about clergymen," remarked Mary, condescendingly, the other day, "but why didn't you have a little more to say regarding the minister's wife?"

"A good many other people are attending to that matter, it seems to me. There's no danger of the minister's wife suffering from having nothing said about her. Do you think there is?"

Mary laughed.

"If you look at it in that way," said she, "you're probably right. Still, you might say a few things that most people with whom she forms a subject of conversation leave unsaid. Now, there is our own clergyman's wife, Mrs. Goodman—as kind and good a woman as you can find. She is really liked by the congregation—most of us just love her—and yet see how she is criticised! They are always wondering how it is she hasn't more time to devote to church work, or saying she attempts far too much; finding fault with the way she trains her children, or intimating that with better management they ought to be able to live very well on his salary, and they can't understand how it is they always seem so hard up. Then there is

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always some one offended because she has not been visited lately—or was overlooked in something that has been going on—or has not been praised enough for some meritorious effort. Mrs. Goodman is a clever woman and has had a long experience, and I know it keeps even her busy trying to live up to the expectation of her husband's congregation. And look at the many women not so gifted by nature and disposition! No wonder some of them are failures. I think the minister's wife has a hard road to travel."

I didn't disagree with Mary, and she went on with her remarks.

"Yes, a rocky road, that's my opinion!" (Mary will talk slang occasionally.) "There may be a few city churches where the minister has an income sufficient to give his wife the comforts that the ordinary well-to-do citizen provides for his—and even then she has not a bed of roses. She has to exercise never-ending discretion and tact, and be so guarded in all she says and does, for fear some busybody will turn over an innocent remark of hers and make trouble. But you know well enough that the great majority of ministers have small salaries and large families. If their wives had nothing to do but attend to their housekeeping and make the best of the income it wouldn't be so bad; but think of all the calls upon their time and attention there are, the things to distract them from their domestic duties.

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“A clergyman’s wife can never portion out her time like other people. There’s always something to disarrange her plans. I know I stayed with Mrs. Smith down in ——” (I won’t give the name of the country town Mary mentioned) “last summer. She had no girl, and was trying to get sewing done for her children—couldn’t afford to put it out. We used to hustle around and try to get things done in the morning—she’s a capital manager—but, you know, we never could be sure of an hour to ourselves. There was always some one sick and she had to leave everything and go to see them, or unexpected visitors flocked in and stayed for the day, or Mr. Smith hospitably brought in half a dozen country parishioners to dinner when there happened to be very little in the house. Then there were sewing societies and meetings, and word would come at the last minute that the organist was sick, ‘Would Mrs. Smith please take the organ for the morning service?’ She took it all as a matter of course, made everybody welcome when they came, and filled the gaps without a murmur. It would have driven me nearly crazy to be at everybody’s beck and call like she was.”

“I’m afraid you are not fitted for a minister’s helpmeet,” said I, somewhat amused by her description. She only looked at me eloquently.

“Then old ladies used to come in and advise her how to dress her children and feed her hus-

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band and make her preserves, and tell her disquieting stories about what an unpopular woman their last minister's wife had been. And she had to go to tea whenever they were invited—and remember to ask after everybody's relations—and speak to the children; and teach a class in Sunday-school; and always see everyone that came to the house, no matter what she was doing. I remember one afternoon she was just tired out and had gone to lie down. When I opened the door to a lady I knew had nothing much to say and always took a terribly long time to say it in, I boldly announced that Mrs. Smith was 'not at home.' She nearly took a fit when she heard what I had done. 'My dear,' said she, 'if Mrs. — finds out I was in the house she'll never forgive me!'

"Then don't you remember Annie Robinson," went on Mary, who seemed fairly launched on her subject, "who married a missionary and went off to China with him—a nice time she's having! And that pretty girl—I forget her name—who went up to the Northwest. Dear me! I hope I'll never happen to fall in love with a parson, because," said Mary, dreamily, "I suppose if he loved me very much I'd marry him!"

"To be sure you would. No girl can resist a black coat. Why, even that ordinary little curate down at your church could have the pick of the congregation if he wanted a wife."

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“Could he, indeed?” exclaimed Mary, who rather resented this sweeping assertion. “I’m not so sure of that. I know I would have to love a clergyman dreadfully well” (I wish you’d heard her emphasis on the “dreadfully”) to marry him and run the gauntlet of the congregation. Besides, fancy how nervous one would feel when he was preaching! Then he might be absent-minded—lots of clever men are—and do remarkable things during the service. Speaking of absent-mindedness, did you ever hear that story they tell of the Reverend Rural Dean ——? He was going on a journey one day, and his wife had packed his valise and seen that he had his clothes on straight and bidden him good-bye, but was called away before she saw him safely out of the house. He had his bag in his hand ready to go, when it struck him that the fire needed replenishing. Laying aside the valise, he filled up the stove from a scuttle that stood conveniently by. Then he glanced at a book for a moment, but suddenly recollecting that his train was almost due, he made a grab for his belongings and dashed down the street. He met one or two friends who seemed inclined to stop and speak, but realizing that he had no time to spare he only gave them a hasty nod and hurried on. It was not till he reached the station that he noticed that his luggage consisted of the coal-scuttle.”

“And what did the poor man do?”

THE MINISTER'S WIFE

“Oh, fortunately, one of his friends who knew his failing mentioned to the wife that he had just met the Dean flying down the street carrying a coal-scuttle, and the faithful woman instantly despatched a messenger to make the needful exchange with her absent-minded spouse.”

“That rather reminds me of poor Mrs. D—’s experience—though it was not absent-mindedness on her part. One portion of her wardrobe was devoted to her belongings and the other sacred to her reverend husband’s apparel. She owned a black cloth dolman—one of those short behind and with long ends in front—eminently suited to the requirements of a staid middle-aged matron. This she always hung in the same place, and, being of a neat and methodical habit, could lay her hand on it in the dark.

“One evening, in the late summer, she had been out, and returned home just as the bell was ringing for the Wednesday evening service. Thinking she might be chilly, she hastily ran upstairs in the dusk for her dolman, and throwing it over her arm sallied forth to church. Imagine her feelings when, after she had walked up the well-lighted aisle, she carelessly laid her wrap on the back of the pew in front, to discover that she had been flaunting her husband’s best pair of trousers. The wretched man had hung them in the wrong place.”

“Poor woman!” said Mary, “I hope she made him carry them home. But I must be going. I

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really think, however, that you might have given a paragraph to the minister's wife."

I don't know but that Mary herself has gone pretty thoroughly into the trials of the clergyman's wife. No doubt there are compensations attached to the position that it did not suit her purpose to dwell upon. The love of an honest Christian gentleman who, realizing the nature of his vows thoroughly, promises to love and cherish her, is not—in these days of frisky husbands and vanishing means—to be lightly set aside in favor of frivolity or worldly prospects. Woman—no matter how she may talk—has an innate love and admiration for simple goodness—a longing to find some stable and worthy object to which she may confidently attach her faith and love. Then every true woman has high ideals of life, a strong sense of duty, and the elements of self-sacrifice in her nature. I don't know that she can find any broader field for the growth and development of all these Christian graces (which fortunately are their own reward) than that offered to the occupants of the parsonage.

Not long ago I heard an old lady remark of her daughter, who was about to marry a minister, "Yes, I'm very well satisfied; they'll never be rich, but they won't be allowed to absolutely starve—and she'll have a husband that is hardly likely to beat her,"—which, we all agree with the old lady, is a desideratum.

THE MINISTER'S WIFE

Perhaps the most trying thing in the life of a minister's wife in the outlying districts is the difficulty of having her family educated. In the sparsely settled districts of Canada many ministers are placed where it is impossible for their children to attend even such schools as there are, and a desultory home-teaching is all they receive. The parents may be perfectly competent to educate their family, but where, may I ask, is the time to devote to it when (as very often is the case) the father has charge of stations many miles apart, has to light the fire and ring the bell, if there chance to be one, for service, attend to his own horse, and take twenty-mile drives over strange and uneven ways that by compliment are called roads; when the mother has to personally attend to all the household duties and iron her husband's collars? True, a reduction is made by many educational institutions in favor of ministers' sons, but when the stipend is as ridiculously small as it is in the case of many missionary clergymen, the sum still required is entirely beyond the father's means. It must be hard for a woman of culture to see her family—in whom she takes a fond mother's interest and pride—growing up around her uncouth and ignorant, her boys unfitted to take that place in life she would have them fill, her girls destined to marry beneath them or be left on the world without the education that would enable them to obtain even the traditional gov-

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erness's position. Though she and her husband may gladly devote themselves to the Master's service, still, to my mind, they would be more than human did the prospects of the family never worry them. In the near future, let us trust, an Educational Fund and similar agencies, the promotion of which is being attempted by various denominations for the purpose of assisting their ministers in this particular, will receive from those enjoying educational facilities, that support of which it is deserving.

There is one thing, however, that I wouldn't advise Mary or any other girl to try. That is to marry a popular young minister and settle down amongst the congregation he has presided over with success and spiritual benefit during his bachelor days. There is something in the very atmosphere of a wife that has been known to have a blighting effect on a flourishing congregation. Did you ever come across the "Ballad of the Fair Preacher"? It runs somewhat thus:

The Reverend Arthur Singleman
Was tall, and slim, and fair,
An earnest light was in his eyes,
A gold tint in his hair.

And as he preached against the wrong,
And bold defended right,
His listeners' rapt, attentive mien
Was a most touching sight.

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The church was filled by young and old—
Particularly young ;
By every maiden in the town
His praises loud were sung.

The Reverend Arthur, as you see
(His sermon ne'er was long),
Was popular, was eloquent,
His drawing powers were strong.

And all went well until one day
The thought came to his life,
"How much more useful I would be
Had I a helpful wife."

"Union is strength," and yet we find,
When Reverend Arthur married,
His congregation fell behind,
The girls at home they tarried.

Many who had in former days
His church filled to the portal,
Discovered now that he was quite
An ordinary mortal.

"A good young man, no doubt," but still
"Not quite what we had thought him."
They went elsewhere—a few remained
To list to what he taught 'em.

If you marry him, take him away somewhere
and start life afresh amidst a new congregation,
where he and his choice will not be exposed to
the remarks of all the girls he didn't marry.
It is a curious fact that people sometimes lose
interest in the ministrations of a man whose
matrimonial destiny is accomplished.

XXIII.

DUST AND DUSTERS.

"If ever I have a home of my own," remarked Jack, who was giving me his views on many things, "it will be run on an entirely new principle."

"Yes?" said I, interrogatively.

"It will," with decision. "For one thing, I'll have none of this everlasting cleaning going on. Women are always making work for themselves—sweeping and dusting and scrubbing and polishing. I'm sure our house is never dirty, and yet they're always turning it upside down. If there isn't anything in the middle of the floor they will pull out all the furniture to see if they can't find some dirt underneath."

"And quite right, too," maintained I, stoutly. "Don't you know dust is wise in its generation, and when it is disturbed in the more open places retires beneath heavy articles of furniture and crowds into dim corners to hide, and roosts on cornices and ledges and the tops of picture-frames, hoping to escape detection?"

"Well, I'd let the poor thing escape now and again," speaking whimsically. "My mother is a merciless woman! The way she and Mary

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and the maids chase and worry and persecute and quickly destroy any stray dust that comes seeking a home with us is a caution! They're after it quicker than Bingo routs a strange cat in the yard."

"That's a good simile! If you notice, the cat returns as soon as your dog's back is turned. Same with dust. You disperse it, and before you know where you are it comes sneaking back, impudently invading your domains, taking possession of your belongings, settling on your doorstep, perching on the back fence of your own especial territory, as it were. I have sympathy with Bingo's resentment of the invasion. If the measures he finds successful in dispersing his uninvited guest would only serve as well in the case of dust—"

"The ordinary housewife's voice would be raised a good deal louder and more often than it is at present, I suppose you were going to say," broke in the young man, "which the fates forbid!"

Some remarks are better ignored. It always disappoints a man when you hear in serene silence something which in the nature of things he expects you to indignantly resent. I didn't at all like the aspersion he cast upon my sex, so only smiled indulgently and inquired with mild interest, "So your idea of true home comfort is dirt and disorder?"

"Not at all! I never said so," returned he

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with some warmth; "only I do object to this eternal cleaning and 'tidying up.' If I were a woman I wouldn't be always at it. I'd clean the house, but I'd let things get good and dirty before I began to rake around. I think it would be so much more satisfactory, too. You could see the fruit of your labor. Women," he went on oracularly, "have no management; they waste so much time and energy over trifles. They are always pottering around and putting things in the proper place, and doing things that don't need to be done and making themselves cross and tired. What does it matter if there is some dust on the top of the book-case, and the front windows are a little smoky? If things are left just where you lay them down they're all the easier to find when you want them next."

"That's true, if nobody else happens to lay anything on top of them, and you happen to remember where you laid them down. I suppose you would not mind if the meals were not very regular?"

"Oh, well, of course, some things have to be looked after. I don't mean to say there is no work at all to do in a house."

"I see. What you mean is that this oppressive neatness, this constant attention to details, is unnecessary. You wouldn't mind if the dinner was slapped on in a rather rough and ready way, so long as it was prepared in time, or if the

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children were playing shop in the front hall with a little of everything in the house around them when you happened to take a friend home?"

He didn't look as if this was exactly what he meant either, but stuck to his point.

"I still think women don't know how to manage the work of a house, or they wouldn't have so much to do. When I get a wife we'll manage things differently. There will be none of this round of washing day, ironing day, sweeping day, and so on."

"How delightful! That's the kind of domestic life one dreams of. Will you ask me to come and stay with you now and again? I don't quite realize how you are going to accomplish this blissful state of things, but no doubt when a man really puts his mind to it it can be done."

He nodded his head with large complacency.

"Oh, yes. A woman should have plenty of time to go about and enjoy herself, with nothing to attend to only her house. I do hope the girl I marry will not be too pernickety and always dusting and making things tidy."

I'm sure I hope so, too. He really deserves a wife of that kind. And if his happiness depends upon it I believe he will be able to find her. Whether his views may change after he secures this prize sooner than her methods is a matter that cannot at present be determined.

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It may be that her carrying out of his liberal principles of domestic economy, untrammelled by the ordinary routine of a well-ordered household, may pall upon him; and it is just possible that he may long for his mother with her broom and duster and "tidying" ways. Then, again, it may be that, directed by the power of his superior intellect, his wife will successfully grapple with those myriads of duties, small and large, that cluster about the housekeeper's path; will be able to finally exterminate that disheartening army of necessary doings that, repelled and dispersed one day, only returns the next, unconquered and reinforced, to the siege. It may be, but—!

With the woman who makes a too great parade of cleanliness, who chases a long-suffering man from room to room with implements of domestic warfare till he knows not where to crawl to escape the turmoil, few of us have much sympathy. She may be a well-meaning and deserving creature, but her energies are, to say the least of it, misdirected. I don't fancy there are quite so many of her, however, as one might be led to suppose. I admit I once knew such an one. She had the reputation of being a "terrible clean" woman. She was. Cleanliness comes next to godliness, but if she put godliness before cleanliness she must have been a very good woman indeed. She scrubbed and rubbed and polished

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from daylight to dark. Her husband and children almost feared to put their feet on the floor or their fingers on any article. Her stoves shone and her windows glittered. But the burden of cleanliness she laid upon her family was too much; they took their muddy boots and romping ways somewhere else. Her husband smoked where a stray bit of tobacco would not be a crime. She "cleaned" them all out.

Still, in the face of such a terrible example of carrying things to excess as that, I'm rather in favor of routine and tidying ways. As it will make little difference to me, I run the risk of alienating masculine approval by admitting that I see no comfort to be derived by a man from spilling tobacco and burnt matches about with careless liberality, nor from the glorious freedom of leaving his boots just where he may happen to shed them.

In a well-ordered household there is no necessity for the search after cleanliness to be obnoxiously obtruded upon the master of the house—especially if he wisely betake himself away for some hours daily. But if our young friend can evolve any new and original method of "running" things without untiring effort on the part of somebody, there are many weary women who will be glad to hear from him.

"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." A woman who was tired of the never-

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ending contest with dust once told me, when we were speaking of belief in ghosts, her opinion on the subject. She said she feared not the return of the spirits of bygone ancestors. It was their dusty bodies that troubled her. She was haunted by dust. The idea rather appealed to my fancy. Perhaps, after all, dust is but an object-lesson ever before us to show us to what we all must come.

XXIV.

TRUTH.

THE desire for admiration and approval is deeply implanted in the human breast—some superior people to the contrary notwithstanding. And while this is so, those who make a business of pleasing will continue to lightly dwell upon facts and politely indulge somewhat in fiction. We often meet people who affect to care not “a hang” what others think or say about them, and they much prefer to hear the plain truth—so they tell you.

Did you ever try them with it? If you have not, and desire to retain their friendship, don't. You'll find that the plain truth about their own shortcomings is almost too strong for weak humanity to receive without making rather a wry face, and possibly loudly reproaching you for giving such an unnecessary and nauseous dose. If the plain truth positively has to be administered, it is wise to dilute it slightly, sweeten thoroughly and add a flavor of playfulness. It will do the patient as much good thus, and it may be more pleasant to take. It really requires an artist to prepare this potion acceptably, as the principal ingredient is very hard to swallow, and apt to disagree with those to whom it is given—though as a rule very beneficial.

This is only with reference to the plain truth,

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of course—there are always a number of pleasant and agreeable verities that one is pleased enough to have presented to one. It may be owing to our natural love for the beautiful, that the idea has gained ground that when the truth is very plain—plain to ugliness—it is expedient to draw the becoming white veil of politeness and social subterfuge, with its softening effect, over her unattractive visage.

It is strange, too, how few can listen with unalloyed pleasure to unstinted praise of others—even their friends. There are some great and generous souls (you and I, for instance) into whose hearts no disfiguring touch of jealousy has crept to mar the beauty of a perfect disposition, but in a general way there are not many who object to a word of criticism—directed toward their neighbors.

The man who studies human nature has found this out. When Miss Dimples sweetly says to Youngly, “Don’t you think Eva So-and-so is looking lovely to-day?” and he, knowing the girl referred to is a friend of hers, and willing to please, replies enthusiastically, “Yes, indeed, I think I never saw her look better! She is a lovely girl—and what beautiful golden hair she has!” Miss Dimples agrees with him smilingly—and it occurs to her that he is rather a chump.

Now the man of experience would never have fallen into that trap. When appealed to, he might have replied, indifferently, “Oh, yes, she’s

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looking well enough," then presently, maybe, with a glance at his companion's darker locks, "I don't much care for such light hair myself," and Miss Dimples would probably have reproved him delightedly for his want of taste, and told him she thought Eva's hair was "just lovely."

But the pleasing man is not of necessity insincere. Some pander to the humors and weaknesses of those with whom they come in contact to serve their own selfish purposes, I admit. But others exercise the happy knack of making those about them content with themselves only from an amiable desire to make things run smoothly. A certain amount of observation and intuition, and a capacity for knowing what to say and what to leave unsaid, are requisite. Mary, who is tactful, gives as her opinion that one can always find something pleasant to say without straining one's conscience. If Mrs. Smith exhibits her child—which has decent eyes and a distressing nose—you needn't sympathetically remark, "What a dreadful pity his nose turns up so!" You could just as easily say cheerfully, "Hasn't he pretty eyes!"—and she'd probably much rather hear it. She may have been told about his nose before, and your corroboration of her own opinion of his eyes will be more satisfactory.

Or, for instance, the pretty girl brings out a photograph. "I have been having my picture taken, Mr. Youngly. How do you like it?"

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The photograph is most artistic, and deals gently with the young girl's few weak points. Mr. Youngly, even, who is very much in love, realizes this.

"Do you think it like me? Rather flatters me, perhaps?" says the sitter, with an expectant smile.

He is not versed in the ways of woman and thinks, poor boy, that now is his time to show an intelligent criticism of the picture's merits, while still pleasing the fair questioner. "It's a lovely picture, and I've seen you look just like that. It really hardly flatters you at all; perhaps the way your face is turned does show your nose at its best, but I think it's nice to have a photograph that does one justice, don't you? Won't you give one to me?" And he is amazed to have Miss Dimples say, rather coldly, that since it flatters her so greatly she doesn't think he'd better have one. When she has a photograph taken that shows her ugly nose more truly she may give him a copy. And though he gets purple in the face trying to make his peace, she remains obdurate. "There is nothing whatever to forgive," she tells him, "you only told me the truth about myself, and it's well to hear the truth now and then, no doubt." But he sees he has not done the right thing, has offended his divinity in some way, and no amount of patching seems to fill the rent his ill-con-

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sidered words have made in the fabric of their friendship.

A man of more experience would have been equal to the occasion. If the pretty girl had asked his opinion of a really flattering picture, he would have probably studied it carefully and judiciously a minute or two, looked at her, then at the card again, and hesitatingly admitted, "Y—e—s, I think it does look like you." Then, more decidedly, "The nose, the features, certainly are yours, but"—with a rather dissatisfied air—"I suppose it must be because your eyes and the color of your hair don't come out that there seems something lacking. I have often noticed that the best-looking people take the poorest photograph; these are not bad, but they might be better. You're going to let me have one, aren't you?"

Then the pretty girl would have smiled deprecatingly and said that for her part she thought the picture was really a great deal prettier than she was herself; her nose, for instance, looked quite Grecian. Would he really like one? Certainly he might have it.

If the picture had been only moderately good, he would likely have glanced at it, then looked closer with an air of doubt, held it off, and presently laid it down and turned away, saying, in disgusted surprise, "Call that you? That thing! You're not going to take any of them, surely; it's no more like you than I am!"

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This, also, will be found to be extremely soothing to the pretty girl's feelings. Regarding the picture, she will conclude she personally must look fetching indeed when people of discernment have such a contempt for the attempted portrayal of her charms. She will modestly say that the picture appears very good to her, and he will argue the point with simple earnestness, and remain delightfully unconvinced. Such a man will rarely be refused one of the despised delineations should he desire it. He will pocket it with a "Well, perhaps it's better than none, but it doesn't begin to do you justice" manner.

The plain girl's photograph generally comes out a great deal better-looking than the original, and *her* feelings have to be carefully dealt with also. Our pleasing man looks at the flattering likeness she diffidently shows, where any wants in coloring or expression are skilfully ignored and moderate features and a momentarily graceful attitude are brought out to the best advantage. "How like you!" cries he, instantly; "exactly yourself; never saw anything better!" And the mind of the plain girl, who is only too willing to believe she looks like that, is comfortably set at rest, and naturally her estimation of the sense and good judgment of her friend is not lessened.

Now the callow youth, with no desire to displease, might have been indiscreet enough to be

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surprised into honestly remarking, "Why, somehow I hardly should have known you! But it is like you, too," pulling himself together. "What a very good picture you take, Miss Dowdy," while he gazes at it meditatively, long enough for Miss Dowdy, who is intelligent if not beautiful, to gather his real ideas on the subject.

At a cricket match the other day I chanced to overhear a man who I feel sure is an agreeable man. He was in attendance upon a rather pretty girl. A little distance from them sat a rival who was attracting considerable masculine attention. As the latter moved off, the girl near me, with an evident effort, remarked magnanimously to her escort, "What very pretty little hands Miss —— has! Did you notice them?" "Didn't happen to look at her hands," replied that diplomatic person, who had been sitting on the grass. "I noticed that she wears about sixes in boots, however."

"As his companion's dainty number threes (narrow) were prominently patting the sward I glanced at the man with new interest. I do like a man who displays such intelligence! He was not handsome. Not knowing him, I have often wondered why he is such an acknowledged favorite—but if he always shows such admirable tact and judgment in his conversational efforts, therein lies the charm.

XXV.

THE SOCIETY COLUMN.

THE Inexperienced One was giving her friend, the editor of the "Society Column," particulars regarding a social function that the latter had been unable to attend.

"I took special notice of who were there, and any pretty dresses, Mrs. Taffyem, so that I could tell you all about it."

"That's a good girl. Was it a decent sort of shine?"

"Oh, fairly successful. Lots of money spent, you know; but badly managed. She takes plenty of trouble over things, but she's as stiff as starch herself and doesn't understand how to make an affair go off well."

"She'll do better by and by; she has had no experience in entertaining, you know—lived in a little country village before they came into their money, and she's afraid to turn around for fear of not doing quite the correct thing. How was she dressed?"

"Black and bright green, with pink and purple touches—one of those hideous experimental pattern dresses they bring out in the first part of the season and work off on gullible women with no taste and plenty of money."

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I've heard the modiste at it, haven't you? 'The very latest thing from Paris, madam, I assure you; and not another like it in Canada. We just imported the one costume. Look at the exquisite blending of those colors! Ah, the French do know how to do things! It would suit your style perfectly. I thought of you at once when I first saw it. I said, "I must show Mrs. Brown-Jones this"—didn't I, Miss Sellers?' turning to her assistant. 'You know, Mrs. Brown-Jones, it is not every lady that has the good taste to appreciate a creation like this.' And the dumpy, commonplace Mrs. B.-J. is so flattered by the idea that she has an individual style to be suited, that she probably buys the gown at once and wears the *outré* garment all season in the eyes of a wondering people, perfectly oblivious of the modifications of style and color that go on all around her."

The editor laughed. "Now tell me," said she, "who were there. The usual crowd, I suppose?"

"Yes, mostly. That lovely Miss Fairmeans was the prettiest girl there, and dressed so sweetly. Do you know her?"

"Oh, yes. She is a charming girl indeed, and so well-bred. But they have no money, and are not at all pushing socially, so never mind about her; I won't put her in. How about the Gayleys?"

"They were there, in all the colors of the rainbow, and talking loudly enough to be heard

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at the other end of the street. Those girls think they may do anything."

"Well, so they may. Their father's worth a million."

"Then the Worthys wore—"

"Yes, yes; I know. They are pretty, modest girls, and always dress well. But never mind them either. I only want the smart set. Was Lady Newly there?"

"Yes; fatter than ever, and bursting out of a snuffy brownish silk. Both her awkward daughters with her, one looking ugly in pink, and the other looking uglier in blue."

"Hush! don't you know they entertain magnificently? And the eldest girl is engaged to the Hon. John Flip."

"He's marrying her for her money, then!"

"Well, that's no affair of ours. He's very highly connected—and may possibly straighten up when he's married. You know old Sir Peter Newly started life as a butcher or something of that kind, and naturally they want birth, and you cannot have everything in this world. Of course he has nothing, and his father-in-law will have to keep him, but Jack Flip is a perfect gentleman when he is sober."

The Inexperienced One was silenced.

"The Toppers were there," she went on again. "He was as flirty as ever. (I hate a married man to go on like that, don't you?) She wore that old grey silk of hers."

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"Not that pearl grey brocade!" cried the editor in outraged tones, dropping her pencil in disgust.

"The same. She's had it made over twice. It's trimmed with tulle this time. Everyone is sick of the sight of it. If she would only have it dyed," she continued, wistfully. "I think she really might have it dyed. The heart grows weary of it."

"She ought to burn it!" returned the editor. "Nothing else has she worn these five years past, and how I'm to describe it again I don't know. It's an old rag! To think of a woman with all the money she has wearing such a thing! Nobody else would dare to insult a hostess with a sight of it."

"Oh, you'll manage the description, Mrs. Taffyem. You know what you are talking about when you begin to speak of her attire anyway, and they say a knowledge of your subject is of great advantage in writing a thing up."

"None of your nonsense, but hurry up and give me a few more. We are spending too much time talking. The Minceys were there last night?"

"Just Mary Mincey—in pink chiffon. Isn't she affected? And now that she's going to marry young Pursey her airs are amazing. What can she see in that stupid chunk of humanity?"

"I am beginning to think you are not fit for

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polite society at all," remarked the editor, severely. "Don't you realize that the brightness of his father's gold would throw a reflected brilliancy on much duller conversational efforts than Mr. Pursey is capable of? I myself have heard him say, 'Er—ah, really, now!' in a most entertaining manner."

Again the Inexperienced One was silenced.

"Did the Proudleys turn up?" continued Mrs. Taffyem. "I do wish those girls would get married. I'm so tired of trying to make them sound young and lovely—with their powder and paint and false hair!"

"Why do you say anything about them, then? I'm sure they're no beauties—one looking scraggy in pale green flimsy stuff, the other a fright in yellow."

"Have to, my dear, their father's a Senator. Yellow silk and pale green, did you say? Ugh! I know how they appeared!"

The Inexperienced One watched the editor with deepening interest while the note was being made.

"Mrs. Frisk as outrageous as ever?" the latter looked up to ask.

"I really don't know whether she was up to her usual form or not, but she seemed to keep half the men in the room pretty well interested. Do you like the way she carries on? And her dress—it certainly was stylish, and she has lovely shoulders and arms, but—"

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"Oh, I know! She's perfectly dreadful! I wonder that her husband stands the way she dresses, and sometimes her behavior is appalling. I believe she drinks."

"Oh, Mrs. Taffyem!"

"Well, perhaps she doesn't—but if you had seen her act in the wild way I have, you would think that the most charitable construction to put on her doings. But thank you, my dear, for your information. And don't mind the way I talk. You'll see what a nice little paragraph I'll make of it."

And next issue the public were informed that "That charming hostess, Mrs. Brown-Jones, entertained her friends at a delightfully informal dance the other evening. Many of the gowns worn were particularly fresh and dainty. Mrs. Brown-Jones was gowned, as usual, in perfect taste, having donned an exquisite Parisian robe of rich black with effective touches of green and purple. Miss Gayley wore a harmonious blending of pink, yellow and sky-blue, noticeably becoming to her fair skin and auburn hair; while her sister, Miss Kate, was much admired in brilliant red, softly veiled in gold-touched gauze of a lighter shade. Sir Peter and Lady Newly were accompanied by their two pretty daughters, Lady Newly in a handsome brocade of the new brown that is to be so much worn, the younger ladies wearing dainty chiffon frocks, pink and blue respectively. By the way, I understand that the

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marriage of Miss Newly to the Hon. John Flip is to take place quite soon. Their many friends will be delighted to know that we will still retain them amongst us, as they intend residing in this city. Mrs. Topper looked remarkably well in that shade of tender grey she so often affects, with soft puffings of misty tulle arranged upon the low bodice. The graceful Miss Mincey, dressed in pink, relieved by faint touches of cream, was followed by admiring eyes, and her stalwart *fiancé* was the recipient of many congratulations. The simple folds and delicate green of Miss Proudley's artistic gown served admirably to set off her rather frail, spirituelle style, and her sister looked remarkably well in yellow silk. Mrs. Frisk, always delightfully gowned, wore a Worth creation of pale yellow and brown. The sweet vivacity and fund of innocent merriment possessed by this jolly little matron would be sadly missed from amongst us, and I trust there is no truth in the *on dit* that Mr. and Mrs. Frisk intend wintering abroad."

And the Inexperienced One, reading, learnt many things about successful editing, and was filled with wonder at the admirable discretion of Mrs. Taffyem.

XXVI.

MARY AND MARRIAGE.

MARY was giving me her latest views regarding matrimony yesterday.

It's a theme she rather likes to dwell upon occasionally, and one that is always interesting to me, for Mary rarely repeats herself. An opinion held by her to-day is apt to be so changed by circumstances or feelings, or some incomprehensible rearrangement of her thoughts, that when she brings it out the day after to-morrow it is a perfect stranger to you and you have the novelty of meeting a new acquaintance. Not a week ago she admitted to me, after spending a day with young Mrs. Cooings, that after all she believed it was "rather nice to be married and have a pretty home and a darling little baby and some man to love you that thought you were just about perfect." She said that although people said and wrote such dreadful things nowadays, she felt sure there were plenty good and true men in the world—like Edward Cooings, for instance—though, of course, he was not quite to her taste, though he made Eva a good husband; and if somebody she loved awfully well asked her to marry him, she thought perhaps she would, and risk it.

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"You know it's an ignoble fate, after all, to be an old maid. People always think you never had a chance to get married, and even some careworn woman with nine children and a drunken husband will say of you, with condescending pity, 'Ah, poor thing! she's an old maid.'"

I agreed with her that the position of being an "unappropriated blessing" certainly had its disadvantages.

"Yes," went on the convert, "it's all very well while you're young and pretty and get all the attention you wish; but by and by, no doubt, when you get tired of going here and there, and you see all the other girls married, it must give one a doleful sort of feeling, don't you think?" and an expression that augured well for the hopes of the ornament of one of the branches of a certain bank dawned in Mary's pensive eyes. And this was only three days ago, remember.

Yesterday she came to inform me that her opinions regarding the wedded state had undergone an entire change.

She said that in her mind marriage was "nothing but slavery," and assured me that no possible consideration could ever induce her to enter its despicable bonds. Men were "mean, detestable tyrants," and so on. I won't go over it all, Mary gets rather carried away by her subject sometimes. Suffice it that I gathered that the hopes of the ornament of that certain bank might be doomed to disappointment should the

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views of her upon whom they were fixed not alter considerably. I felt sorry for the ornament; he's a youth I take an interest in.

"And what may be the reason for this change of front, this tirade against miserable, monstrous, contemptible man to which you are treating me?" inquired I, presently.

"I stayed to dinner at Mrs. Smith's last night," responded my friend, with gloomy terseness.

"Oh," said I, vaguely, not quite seeing the point of her reply, and then—a bit irritated by her continued silence—"they must have given you something uncommonly bad for dinner!"

"Thank goodness, I don't care what I have to eat—and the meal was good enough—though Mr. Smith found all sorts of fault with things. He's a perfect crank, that man; dictatorial, domineering, grumpy. We are all very intimate, you know, so he didn't trouble to put on his best company manners for my benefit. When he came in he scolded because the house was too warm—said it was 'funny how all women liked to cook themselves.' When she opened a window, complained that the draught was 'enough to blow the hair off one's head.' Made an awful row because some paper he thought he had left in a certain place wasn't there—said she 'must have let the children tear it up'—and afterwards found it in another pocket. She brought his slippers and ran around at his call like a

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little dog, and he took it all as a matter of course. But it was at dinner that he really outshone himself. The soup was cold and the joint overdone. 'Why did she always have potatoes cooked the one way?' and 'What kind of sauce was that on the cauliflower?' (The sauce was rather lumpy, but what about it?) It was 'strange she couldn't remember that he didn't like lemon flavoring in a pudding,' and 'if that was the best coffee the cook could make she ought to be given her walking-ticket.' It sounded so small to hear a great man making such a fuss over his food!"

I had to admit that Mr. Smith's conversational efforts, as reported by Mary, were not very edifying. "Perhaps the dinner *was* bad," I suggested. "I've some sympathy with a man at the mercy of a conscienceless cook."

"Not a bit of it! Things were very fair; but men are such greedy animals—always thinking about what they'd like to eat or drink; and they are cross and selfish, and I don't want to have anything to do with them; and an old maid has a snap compared with the lot of the ordinary married woman."

And not giving me time to bring forward anything in reply—which, having the happiness of the ornament at heart, I might have essayed—she was gone.

Mary has a little way of doing that. If she makes any rash statements which she sees you

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about to disprove, or suddenly finds herself on untenable ground, what does she do? Stay and let you show her where she is wrong? Not she! Off she is, like a flash. That's one trait I don't altogether like in Mary.

Whether it is better to marry or to remain single is a matter I have no desire to discuss. I don't say I have no views on the subject—but if I have they are not for publication. So many people eagerly air their various experiences, so much valuable advice is graciously given, such quantities of excellent argument pro and con, such exhaustive dissertations are brought to bear upon this ever-timely topic, that the world can well get on without further light on the subject. The more so as not one creature in a hundred avails himself of the riches of all this fund of wisdom and advice, but, barren of all but his own inclination, makes his choice as it may seem good to him.

It is more on the subject of dinner—dinner as an ever-present danger in the household, the rock upon which countless numbers of matrimonial barques are wrecked, the trapdoor of happiness, the bell that wakes one from one's dreams, the man at the door with a bill, the thief in the night, the snake in the grass, the big drum in domestic discord—that I have a few words to say.

Mary was to a certain extent correct when she stigmatized man as a greedy creature, concerned

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about what he shall eat—he may not be unduly concerned, but to the best of men dinner is a matter of vital importance. There is also something in what she said about women not caring what is set before them.

It is generally conceded that the matter of dining is of much less moment to the gentler sex than it is to the lords of creation. “Familiarity breeds contempt,” and it may be that constant association with things eatable in their crude and unfinished state, knowledge of the necessary preliminaries, a weary disgust for the never-ending round of preparation, robs one of that fine respect and admiration for a culinary success that is displayed by the man to whom it is introduced in its finished perfection.

Does the humorist laugh over the effort of his own brain? It is the public to whom it is dished that thoroughly enjoy his *bon-mot*. He may know it is good and take a certain pride in his production, but where is the delicate flavor, the pungency, that charms those to whom it is served? He is so tired combining his materials—cutting, paring, weighing, spicing, boiling it down and beating it into shape, as it were, that he has no relish for it and would just as soon read anything else. Who would write jokes for his own delectation? Is it strange that woman would just as soon sit down to bread and jam and a cup of tea as cook for herself—or even order an elaborate spread?

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But let her not fancy that such fare will fill her husband's soul with contentment. Be wise, wife of his bosom! He may love you devotedly, but be careful what you feed him on.

Think of our first parents. What made trouble in the garden of Eden? Something Eve gave Adam to eat. And down through the ages the wrongdoing of the first woman has followed her daughters through countless generations, and to-day the latest man complains of his wife bitterly, as did the first, that she gives him to eat of the things that he shouldn't taste.

If man selected his wife for the excellence of her domestic virtues and her certified ability to construct good cakes and pies, instead of choosing her for the shape of her nose or the fascinating dimple in her cheek, things might gradually improve for him, and dinner presently attain that dignity and prominence in the mind feminine that it is so well worthy of holding.

The wise mother of to-day who has her daughter's happiness in mind, certainly tries to teach her a smattering of domestic economy, that she may be able to, in some degree, hold things together in a house of her own. At the same time, that is not allowed to interfere with more important matters, it is only a side issue. The wise mother realizes that if her daughter doesn't take plenty of time to curl her hair, and learn to dance gracefully, and play golf and tennis, and generally make herself fascinating and agree-

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able, there is very little prospect of her ever having a home of her own to preside over, a husband to do justice to—except it may be some practical-minded widower with ten children who wants an inexpensive housekeeper. This being the case, what wonder so many lives are wrecked on “the reef of woman’s woe”—dinner?

If woman would only appreciate the sacredness of her obligations in this matter, and realize that her husband’s stomach will be hers to cherish long after his heart may have strayed from her keeping, the importance of it might be borne in upon her—

“ Oh! love for a year, a week, a day,
But the dinner, the dinner comes every day.”

And all this wandering dissertation just because Mary found exception to Mr. Smith’s remarks about what was set before him. It’s ridiculous! As for Mary, she will have to go to cooking-school and learn to object to lumpy sauce, or she won’t prove worthy the love of that bank *attaché*.

XXVII.

SENTIMENT.

WE often meet people regarding whom we are apt to make up our minds. They are ordinary, commonplace, practical personages, we think; anyone may plainly see they have no sentiment about them. Their minds have evidently never soared beyond the environments of their bodies. They have no imagination. We cannot fancy them dreaming dreams or seeing visions. They are altogether prosaic, and entirely lacking in those poetic feelings, that finer touch of sentiment, that lift their owners to a higher plane.

But it is well to be chary of judging from manner and outward appearance. A man may be uninteresting, fat, and talk chickens, whose being is filled with a love for the grand and beautiful in nature. It is quite possible for us to be vastly mistaken in our estimate of our neighbors. We are as likely to overlook their finer points as to overestimate our own.

In the hearts of all men are poetic feelings— aspirations, yearnings, softening memories or tender hopes, regrets and undefined longings. Probably there have lived comparatively few human beings who have not, at some time in their existence, attempted to express their feelings in verse. It may have been very faulty verse. They may not have succeeded, even to

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their own satisfaction; they may have quickly given up the endeavor, but moved by the stress of some inward stirring each has essayed to give voice to his song—and in most cases the productions are different from what one might expect from the singer.

For instance, there is a family living across the street from us. The father is a middle-aged man who has made money and rather likes to impress you with the fact, while not caring to have the circumstances of his youth referred to. Bald-headed and stout, enviably successful in business, a good husband and father, though a trifle impatient of his youngest son's want of attention to his books—apparently enjoying his prosperity to the full—one might almost be surprised to find such retrospects as the following stored away in his desk. Yet there they are.

MY YOUTH

When I was but a growing lad,
A little shaver quite,
With coats that always got too short
And boots that grew too tight,
I had to split the kindling-wood,
And clear the snow away,
And bring the cow, and go to school,
And didn't get much play.

I used to hate to clean my boots,
And wash my hands for school;
I thought the boy who liked his books
Must be an awful fool;

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I loathed the many messages,
And idled with my chums ;
I hated sitting still in church ;
Oh, my, I hated sums !

But, looking backward through the years,
It seems to me to-day
I must have had a happy life
In those days far away.
Then I was longing for the time
When I should be a man,¹
And now it seems to me I'd like
To be a boy again.

I think of how on holidays
We left the town behind,
And light of heart, and gay, and strong,
With naught to fret our mind,
We wandered o'er the country-side,
From early morn till late,
In search of birds, or fruits, or flowers,
Or " worms to dig for bait."

Or loitered where the clear, cool stream
Its pebbly banks was laving,
Returning late with sunburnt backs
From surreptitious bathing.
And, oh, the appetites we had—
My thousands could not buy
A morsel with the flavor of
My mother's apple pie.

I often thought my lot was hard
In those days, when a kid,
And that I had no fun ; but now
It seems to me I did.
And looking back, although I know
I suffered (p'rhaps with cause),
And wasn't happy all the time,
It seems to me I was.

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Kind memory, like a friend who tells
Of only pleasant things,
Omitting all unkind remarks,
Recounting not the stings,
Brings only to me now the tale
Of what in youth was good—
I might not like to be a boy,
And yet—I think I would.

His wife, a motherly little body, excellent as a housekeeper and given to waiting on her husband and spoiling her boys, surely never relieved her rebellious mind by getting off the wicked parody that may be found lying at the bottom of an old work-box of hers! Here it is:

HIS MOTHER.

(BY HIS WIFE.)

Who was it that was perfect quite,
Of whom I hear, from morn till night,
That everything she did was right?
His Mother.

Who fed him always with the best,
And on his plate sweet dainties pressed,
And realized a man must rest?
His Mother.

Who was it always brushed his clothes,
And never left undarned his hose,
And kept his slippers near his toes?
His Mother.

Whose home-made bread was always light,
Her pie-crust short, her pickles right,
Her kitchen clean, her kettle bright?
His Mother.

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Who thought there was his equal none,
And left no mortal thing undone
To fully spoil her only son ?
His Mother.

And now that she has come to stay,
And guide me in the proper way
To treat her boy, it's just, I say,
A bother.

I love him dearly, but, you see,
I sometimes kind of think if he
Would praise, and wait a bit on me,
I'd ruther.

It may be, though, when I am dead,
And number two reigns here instead,
Tales of my perfect ways she'll dread—
That other.

Meantime, though all my feelings rise,
I crush them, smile, let Ma advise,
For faultless in my husband's eyes
Is "Mother."

If she did write it it must have been in the very early days of her married life—before she rightly appreciated her mother-in-law.

Now sentiment is what one might naturally expect from the pretty eighteen-year-old daughter. She has not known a care in the world, has never known sorrow or disappointment, enjoys perfect health, and has an eligible lover who is devotion itself—she will surely sing of Love, Hope and Happiness. But no; she has imagination—indefinite sort of yearnings. Perhaps it is, being so young and pretty and alto-

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gether happy, that imaginary woes have a pleasing fascination for her, and in the locked diary that is sacred to the outpourings of her inmost soul one need not wonder to find such harrowing wails as this:

And wilt thou come to my silent tomb
When the daisies deck the sod,
When the birds sing sweet, and gold is the wheat,
And the summer grasses nod?

My heart is broken; my life is dead;
Oh, how can I longer bear
This pain and loss, this bitter cross,
This burden of woe and care?

Ah! Love, that unknowing hast passed me by,
Wilt thou come to my silent tomb
When the birds sing sweet and gold is the wheat,
And the daisies are in bloom?

Oh, say, when this dreary life is o'er,
Wilt thou shed a tear for me,
And breathe a sigh for the days gone by,
And her, who died for thee?

She probably wept copiously during the writing of this pathetic effort, and had a comfortable feeling as she laid it away that there were unfathomable depths to her being; emotions and possibilities were hers that even her lover failed to appreciate.

Charlie, the youngest boy, is a delicate lad of thirteen. Of a timid and sensitive disposition, the other boys rather bully him. This, perhaps, is one reason for his objection to the paths of

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learning. His parents, who are undecided whether to put him in a bank or educate him for the ministry, would be considerably astonished did they know the martial aspirations, the unbridled longings for a wild and roving existence that surge and throb and burn within his boyish breast. This effusion—which was written on the page of his copybook where the intention had evidently been that he should inscribe innumerable times “Zealously Endeavor to Improve”—may not be a perfect composition, any more than the others are, but it carries its meaning clearly:

I'd like to be a sailor bold,
The raging main to roam,
And pace the decks and be shiprecked,
And bring rich treasures home.

I'd like to be a warrior brave,
And fight and lick the foe:
And what care I though death be nigh,
To Glory I would go.

I'd awful like to be a chief,
And lead my braves to war,
And scalp the other injin men,
And whoop, and yell, and roar.

Or a cowboy, riding a bronko wild,
With big boots, and armed to the teeth:
And a belt and fringe, and a wild fierce look
That scares folks most to death.

I wish I might be a deteketive smart,
And catch the villain bold,
And get rewards and praise and that,
And about me have stories told.

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And I sometimes think if I couldn't be him
'Twould be grate, though of course not right,
To be a reckless robber bold,
And break into things at night.

Then a circus man has a glorious life,
And a hunter's wild and free ;
I want no books but Nature's looks,
'Bleeve I'll run away to sea.

There seem to have been odds and ends of favorite authors running through his mind, and his spelling is a little uncertain—but on the whole Charlie's a good writer.

Until a few weeks ago it never occurred to the eldest son, who is athletic and not much of a ladies' man, that poetry was worth reading. He was the sort of man that considers Tennyson maudlin, and jeers at love. But at a tennis tea, to which, much against his will, he had to take his sister, he happened to be asked to look after a little dark-eyed girl who didn't know a thing about sports—but was awfully anxious to learn. She made such an intelligent listener, and said he was such a good explainer, and told him so innocently that she never saw anyone so big and strong as he was, and looked up at him out of her pretty brown eyes, and altogether seemed such a sensible sort of girl, that he couldn't help rather liking the poor little thing.

She must be quite an authority on games now, for he takes her to everything that is going on, and goes to see her three evenings a week to

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clear up any points she may not quite understand. I expect it won't be long before he tries verse-making. Even now there is a preoccupied look in his eyes, as if he were searching his mind for something to work up satisfactorily with brown eyes and raven tresses.

By the way, have you noticed how much easier it is for a novice to weave blue eyes and golden tresses into touching and love-laden rhyme than to apostrophize darker charms? So many suitable and telling words are easily found to rhyme with blue—true, sue, woo, you, adieu—oh, numbers of them! But if her eyes are brown or black, what have you?—town, clown, down, noun; clack, tack, sack, rack—none of them any good at all to express your feelings. A dark girl will keep you struggling for weeks when you could dash off a beautiful thing inspired by blonde loveliness in next to no time. If you have not already fallen in love—and think of inditing verses to her when you do—be advised and fix your attentions upon a fair girl.

XXVIII.

SUFFRAGE.

MARY laid a bundle of papers and magazines on the table before seating herself.

"I am on a debate," announced she, importantly, evidently too filled with her own affairs to give time to the usual greetings.

"Oh, are you?" said I, in some surprise—not in my mind readily associating her with such doings.

"Yes. Our Young People's Association is having a debate at its meeting next week, and Mrs. Gresham, who is getting up the programme, insists on my taking part. They say I never do anything. It's on Woman's Suffrage, and I think perhaps it will be rather fun—if I can think of anything to say. I'd sooner listen."

"And what do you know on the subject of Woman's Suffrage?" inquired I.

"Nothing whatever," said she, comfortably, "and so I have come to you to tell me all about it."

I recognized the implied compliment, yet felt that Mary was just a bit too casual.

"Now, who's getting up this subject, may I ask? You or I?"

"I am," returned she, unabashed. "But you

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know well enough *I* never wanted a vote! I know nothing about woman's rights—and care less. Now, you read the papers. You really ought to have the questions of the day at your finger ends!" and she actually looked at me with an air of high severity. "I did expect, at least, that you would be able to tell me which side I had best be on to get the sympathy of the audience. I have my choice, but must decide by to-morrow."

I never have the heart to refuse help to Mary when she is in a quandary.

"Of course I can give you some of the stock arguments on each side," conceded I, "but you will have to work it out for yourself more or less. Suppose you settle on which side you wish to argue. The best thing you can do is to go home and read up some of those articles I see you have. Then come back this afternoon and we will thresh out the great question over a cup of tea. I'll help you all I can—though I cannot promise that will be much."

She rose assentingly and gathered up her fund of information.

"I think I'll be against having votes," meditated she. "What do women want the suffrage for anyway? I'm sure *I* don't! I have no sympathy whatever with a lot of silly, screaming, agitating creatures that would be better at home. All the men are dead set against the movement—and I do want to be on the winning side. I'll be

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against it, wouldn't you? There are *no* good reasons for women wanting to vote."

I saw she had made up her mind and really did not ask advice.

"By the way," inquired I, as she reached the door, "are you thinking of wearing that hat?"

"I don't know," turning in surprise. "What has that to do with it? It's a trifle elaborate for the morning, isn't it? But I wore it to-day just to let you see it. Do you think it pretty?"

"Mary," said I, impressively, as I critically regarded the feathers curling about her dainty ear, "take my advice. You wear that hat and your new *directoire* gown, and you'll be on the winning side—whichever side you take."

She deigned only a toss of her pretty head and a supercilious glance over her shoulder as she left me.

It was the next day before I saw her.

"Well, 'Anti,' " was my greeting. "I suppose you have gathered a crushing array of facts and deductions that will utterly annihilate the arguments of those who espouse the cause of the mistaken, unwomanly, clamoring suffragette."

"Do you know," confessed my friend, slowly and rather uncertainly, "the fact is that I am not so sure that I want to be on that side after all. I have been looking into the question—I never did so before—and between ourselves"—here she suddenly took a firm stand—"I think it is preposterous that women have not had votes

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long ago. How dare men refuse such a reasonable request?"

I sat back and looked at her. Long as I have known Mary, I am still capable of surprise at her lightning changes of attitude. A half-smile dimpled her face, and she seemed amused at her own change of front, even while pulling me up sharply.

"Stop looking at me as if I had two heads—I suppose I may change my mind if I like!—and give me some good reasons, if you can, why woman *should* be refused the franchise. By the way, 'franchise' just means the privilege of voting. Somehow I always thought it had to do with street-cars or electric light or telephones, or something a company had to get, didn't you? And 'suffrage,' that simply means a voice in deciding things, a vote. I looked it up, and it has nothing to do with 'sufferings' or 'sufferage.' Why, you know," confided she, "I remember not so long ago actually having a hazy notion that it meant something like suffering—suffragist seems as if it might be that, too—when they get arrested and put in prison and all that." And she laughed with delicious ingenuousness.

I laughed, too. It wouldn't hurt Mary to consult the dictionary even oftener than she does. She may have read my thoughts, for she conceded hastily, without admiration:

"Oh, of course *you* knew the exact meaning! You always have your nose buried in the dic-

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tionary. I forgot that. But now bring forward some good reasons why women should not have votes," persisted she, once more getting down to business.

"Well, to begin with, the other side will assert that, take her in the vast majority, she does not *want* a vote. A few spinsters of uncertain age, and strong-minded women past their first youth are making all the fuss. Mind you, they are all old and ugly and unsexed (whatever that may be), and it is a pity they are not at home minding babies and darning socks and—"

"She *doesn't want* a vote!" interrupted Mary. "Look at the years and years she has been asking for it. Look at the thousands of women to-day, young, old and middle-aged, rich and poor, of every social grade, who are expressing by every means in their power their desire for a right to vote, and their determination to win such concession from Parliament! She 'doesn't want' a vote!"

"Yes, yes, she may say she does, but women don't know what they do want anyway."

"That's just where men are mistaken. Women always do know what they want—and very often they say it, too. Why, Eve, the very first woman, knew exactly what she wanted. She wanted clothes. And all down the ages the cry has come, 'Clothes, clothes! give me CLOTHES, plenty of them and pretty ones!' And the desire of the last woman is expressed in the

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words of the first, 'Clothes! I have no clothes! I am simply naked!' Surely every man will admit that. I fancy I won't have much difficulty in refuting the argument that woman does not know what she wants."

I agreed that the point was well taken.

"If you come to that, it is *man* who doesn't know what he wants. Look at Adam. Did he know what he wanted? No. The Lord only knew what Adam wanted, and He gave it to him. Adam wanted a wife. To do him justice, man, after he was once shown his need, recognized it, and ever since, one of the first things he asks for when he comes to man's estate is a wife."

I began to think that Mary might help win that debate on more than her good looks.

"You might intimate, also, that even yet, with regard to a wife's perfections, the Lord only knows what some men want," suggested I.

"N-o," said Mary, slowly and thoughtfully, "perhaps I had best keep away from that. It's too true. I don't wish to hurt their feelings. What do you think the 'against' ones will say next?"

"Um—um—they may state that if she were given a vote woman would not know what to do with it—or else, in the perversity of the feminine character, once having secured the privilege she would not use it."

"Let her do what she likes with it!" cried Mary, with some heat. "Let her wear it in her

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hat, or hang it on the wall, or make a centrepiece of it. It is not as if it were something that might explode and kill everyone in sight if she didn't know how to handle it! Really, it is comical to read some of the nonsense about 'protecting her' from something that apparently (in the minds of men) might have some awful consequences. She might find some new and original way to use a vote, but that has to be proved. It is easy to make assertions. I maintain that the ordinary woman is quite as capable of understanding affairs of state and forming an individual opinion on a question as a raw country youth of twenty-one who doesn't know his hay-foot from his straw-foot, or an ignorant foreigner who has not been in the country long enough to learn its language, apart from mastering its political problems. Granted that she takes little interest in politics at present—with some exceptions—what is the object of her doing so? She is powerless. When she begins to take an intelligent interest she is apt to become restless in contemplation of her position in the community—classed with infants, Indians, idiots and inmates of prisons. That is the list of those having no votes, is it not?"

"But I understand infants and Indians are wards of the Government, and—"

"Well, you and I are no longer infants, so we are not wards of the Government; we are sane, we are not criminals—so the State is mak-

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ing no provision for *us*. We are amenable to all the laws, like men are. We pay taxes. We should have votes if we want them. Now I think of it, what are the rights and privileges of Magna Charta that the men forced that old king to give them? Isn't one of the things no taxation without representation? Why don't tax-paying women come in on that, if it were nothing else? The men had to fight for their privileges then, and they are going to defend them now (quite forgetting that women are justified in following their example). It's a case with them, seemingly, of 'What we have we'll hold.' Poor thing! I have some sympathy with man after all. He is, in a way, driven to his last ditch. 'Here,' says he, 'woman has obtained entrance to nearly all the professions and walks of life aforetime sacred to MAN, and now she wants to take my vote. It is my very own, the insignia of my superiority. I will defend it with my life. *She shall not have it!*'"

"That was dramatic. Get that effect in the debate, Mary," commended I, encouragingly.

"It—" repeated the speaker, meditatively, taking no notice of my words, "that gives me another idea. One might really suppose from the fuss the men make that there was to be only one vote in a household, and that the woman was going to take it away from its lawful owner, put on her bonnet and go to the polls, leaving him at home to mind the baby! There would be votes

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enough to go around, would there not? Every man would have in effect two votes, instead of only one as at present, for he would have his own vote just as now—and he might beat his wife and make her vote the way he wished, even if she should fancy casting hers in some other direction.”

“Ah! there you come to another stock argument against woman suffrage. It would cause horrible dissension in otherwise happy homes. See how men argue on political questions and how hot they get—what bitterness comes through partisanship, and so on. If Pa should be a Reformer and Ma hold Conservative views, we are told that they would fight like cat and dog, and domestic peace would be a bygone thing.”

“If married people allow themselves to quarrel they will always find something to argue about—if it’s only the hanging of the curtains. A mutual interest should be a bond of union,” cried Mary. “Just think. Pa need never leave his own cosy fireside to discuss the great questions of the day; he could talk them over with Ma. Or they might both put on their hats and sally forth to political meetings together, like they go together to church or theatre nowadays. It is likely they would get home before two in the morning and be able to find the keyhole—but I don’t know that that would be any disadvantage. Woman would acquire a broader outlook. Matters of real moment to humanity

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might take the place in conversation of idle gossip, scandal and discussion of servants and fashions. The time now frittered in afternoon teas and bridge might be given to matters of public interest, and domestic affairs be no more neglected than at present. A woman's life need not be given over to politics because she has a vote and takes the interest of a citizen in her country, any more than a man need neglect his business for the same reason. As it is, women take a great interest in all that is for the betterment of humanity and the good of the country. They are good organizers and excellent canvassers."

"Yes, and candidates willingly make use of their influence to win seats. In elections all over Great Britain important women take, and for years have taken, their part as canvassers, organizers, demonstrators. They do it more there than our women do here in Canada."

"It is possible," mused Mary, evidently still contemplating the subject of politics in the family, "it is possible that political leanings might in a measure take the place of religious differences. Suppose, for instance, some bigoted old Conservative storming, when approached by a prospective son-in-law of Liberal tendencies, 'What! my daughter marry a Reformer! When her mother and I and our people before us have always been good Conservatives, and she has been brought up in the same faith! Never, sir!

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Not with my consent. She must marry in her own party, or you must turn with her—or at least promise that the children shall be brought up Conservatives.’ ”

When our laughter ceased I reminded her—“About taxes, Mary. They’ll take you up on that. Women pay taxes on property and income, but I think they don’t pay a poll-tax.”

“Oh, don’t they?” with interest. “And what is a poll-tax?”

I glanced towards my bookshelf, willing to further impress my careless friend with the merits of seeking knowledge at its fountain-head. “Let us get the dic—”

“No!” cried Mary, rebelliously, “I *won’t* look in your old dictionary! I know near enough. Poll is the place they go to vote or something. You tell me.”

I felt for a moment like being severe with Mary and letting the definition go at that—besides I was not quite sure myself, and I wanted a glance.

“The poll-tax,” said I clearly and coldly, “is a personal tax levied on each man, under certain circumstances, and paid by him every year.”

“Oh, a head tax. Well, why should a woman not pay that, too?”

“She has no head worth taxing, I suppose.”

“There,” said Mary, slowly, after apparent consideration of this viewpoint, “there, it seems to me, one gets an excellent conception of the

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whole insulting, arrogant attitude of men on the question. I begin to understand some clever, large-minded and capable women being so irritated by contemplation of certain of the electorate who are tacitly accepted as being mentally superior, that when they consider the matter it makes them wild. Any irresponsible, drunken lout carries weight simply because he is a man; while our sex, no matter how well qualified by mental power, depth of understanding and mature judgment, are counted out—women who have in many instances large property interests, who have brought children into the world, and have no voice in making the laws that shall affect them. It does not seem quite fair.”

“Don’t forget that spinsters and widows enjoy municipal privileges in many cases.”

“That is one reason it is all so inconsistent. And then women lose even their poor little municipal votes when they marry, while men have been known to vote for years after they were dead. The records of any election will show you that! I am not sure that it is altogether a compliment man pays himself when he decides that a woman who is so foolish as to marry is not wise enough to be allowed to retain her voting power.”

“Well, probably he knows best. Possibly he thinks he can give her enough to do to look after him when she gets him.”

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"To my thinking," ignoring my last suggestion, "a true marriage should add to the reasons for a woman having a vote, as by marriage she gains added dignity and social independence. The day is gone when a man bought his wife, body and soul. Love and mutual interests are what hold people together—and their sense of duty to those about them. Then again," she continued, "think what a lot of extra money would go to the Government if women were enfranchised and taxed."

"The other side will tell you that their husbands would have to pay it."

"Not them!" (evidently meaning the husbands) "and if they did, what of it? It would only mean a feather less for her hat. But I am certain most women would be quite willing to save or earn the few dollars required, when they once realized the value to them of a voice in their country's government—and you have to pay taxes on a dog!" Mary *is* amusing.

"They will tell you that woman's greatest strength is that quiet moral influence that is an inspiration to man, and that she will lose all this weight, and irretrievably lower herself, if she should come forward and cast a ballot for a member of parliament."

"If there is any truth in this influence of woman for great good that one hears men talking so grandly about, why not strengthen her position by giving her a vote, and so enable her

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to help *do* some of the things she now dreams—the reforms and advancements she now advocates and pleads with men to carry by their votes. As society is now constituted, are not many women forced to attain their ends by coaxing, wheedling and degrading subterfuge—‘managing’? Oh! when I get a husband I hope he won’t be one of these pigheaded, narrow-minded men one has to manage. I would like to be able to be frank and open with him and feel that, within limitations, he would respect and allow my individual views—knowing that my wifely respect and love would influence me to fall in with his ideas and wishes in all possible ways.”

“They will tell you that women would vote for a candidate because they admired his eyes or the shape of his nose, or liked the way he did his hair. They would have no true understanding of politics.”

“I deny it! And if they did, what of it? That is just one of the mean things men would say—and it is their own sex that is swayed by personal beauty to an extent women can never understand. As for grasping political matters, do you know, the word ‘politics’ is something I did look up in the dictionary, for I felt I had always taken it too much for granted, and scarcely knew clearly what it meant. The definition I found had much to do in deciding me. Here is what I found.”

She read a note:

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“ ‘Politics—that part of ethics’ (and ethics is the science of human duty) ‘which has to do with the regulation and government of a nation or state; the preservation of its safety, peace and prosperity; the defence of its existence against foreign control or conquest; the augmentation of its strength and resources; the protection of its citizens in their rights, with the preservation and improvement of their morals. In a bad sense it means artful or dishonest management to secure the success of party measures or schemes.’ ”

She laid down the extract and looked at me impressively.

“Now, if there is anything in the true definition of politics that makes it improper for any decent woman, with loyalty to country and love of humanity in her heart and just the average amount of ordinary common sense in her head, to seek to take part in, I would like you to point it out. And if politics has come to be considered as such only in its bad sense, it is high time a purifying element were introduced.”

She waited a moment, but I found nothing special to say.

“Certainly party divisions might not be so strongly emphasized if there were universal suffrage. People might endeavor to try how far they could work together, instead of each party striving to secure and retain power by hook or

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by crook. Look at the colonies where women have the suffrage. (By the way, they were the first to offer substantial aid to Britain's navy.) They seem doing pretty well. It hasn't taken a wheel off, or anything, in their case, has it?"

I couldn't say that it had.

"I have been reading about Finland, where they actually have women in parliament. There the people were so oppressed by tyrannical Russian rule that the entire population combined and, working together, freed themselves from the yoke. The men found the benefit of having the women help, and were willing that they should share in the political freedom so obtained—decent of them, too, wasn't it?"

"But, Mary," remonstrated I, after we had both approved of the men of Finland, "to come back to the women of our own nationality, even supposing women are asking only for a reasonable privilege, why do they go about it in such an unseemly manner? Such extreme and unwomanly tactics, such vulgar aggressiveness! Why are they not quiet and ladylike and reasonable in their requests, making them through proper channels? They'll ask you that, for sure."

"Reasonable!" cried the lately-developed champion of votes for women. "They have been working in a reasonable way and through the accepted channels for forty years, only to be put aside and derided. I don't blame them for trying some other method. They are forced

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into it. They are doing it to make the Government look thoroughly ridiculous in refusing the request. The prominent men cannot be always running shrieking to policemen for protection—‘Save me! She’s after me again! Take her away, o-o-Oh! Take her AWAY!’ It’s as funny as a Punch-and-Judy show. Reasonable, indeed! For that matter, did you ever know a man that liked to see a reasonable woman? She irritates him. He doesn’t understand reason in a woman. It’s the unreasonable women that get what they want. The trouble with these ‘women’s rights’ women of former years was that always they were far *too* reasonable. They dressed plainly and sensibly, wore easy boots, cared not for fashion, and didn’t curl their hair. And their arguments were so clear, reasonable and to the point that men couldn’t abide them. Between ourselves,” she drew nearer to me confidentially, “why doesn’t woman simply say she wants the suffrage—give no reason, but just say she *wants* it—and if further pressed she might say she wants it ‘because.’ Then men who are used to sweethearts, wives and daughters would at last understand, and would know she must have it. Let her sit and cry. Let her storm a little and stamp her foot. (See that it is small and very neatly shod, though.) Let her refuse to be soothed or bought off with anything else. It won’t be long before some gallant, protecting and indulgent man will arise, turn desperately

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and furiously on the legislators and say, 'She's crying! Don't you see she's crying? How dare you make her cry? Can't you give her what she wants? What? She *wants* it; surely that's enough. If you don't let her have it I'll know the reason why—and there are more men like me!' That's the plan *I* would advocate. I'd get after some of these pretty, petted wives and daughters of American millionaires, interest them in the cause, and get them to sit around saying, 'Poppa, I want a vote; get me a vote.' Now that ladies of rank in England have set the fashion, it should not be difficult to win converts in Canada and the States."

The mingled humor and seriousness in her face was a study.

"Besides, all the reasonable people of both sexes have been convinced long ago. It is only the prejudiced, self-willed and unreasonable that remain to be considered. But, seriously, it is a matter of education. The justice of equal suffrage must appeal to every one who thinks the thing out. In years to come all that is ludicrous in the present campaign will be forgotten. A future generation will find it hard to understand why such opposition was shown to so reasonable a request. Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel will rank with the great reformers of history. The list will be, Pankhurst, Peel, Pitt—"

"Oh, Mary, if the Houses of Parliament could hear you!"

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"They'll have to listen before long to what they are closing their ears to now," and she nodded sagely; "and really I fancy they'll be a little sorry they hadn't the wit to grasp the situation, and the grace to accept and approve the solidifying of the nation that votes for women would give. The governments in refusing women equal citizenship are throwing away the resources of the country—good material, ready to their hands—because it is not exactly what they have been accustomed to make use of; and tradition, custom and self-sufficiency loom so large in their eyes that they are blinded to changing conditions that have grown up around them. They'll *have* to give the women votes. Public men cannot afford to be made so ridiculous. They might perhaps resist any other form of attack. This unmanly attempt to terrorize and cr-r-r-ush the suffragists only makes the contrary ones more determined in their demands, the quiet, thinking ones indignant, and the men themselves laughing-stocks." She spoke with conviction.

"What about this other section of disapproving and shocked women—the Anti-Suffrage Society—who are begging the authorities to be firm and not to give a secondary and rightly less important sex any voice in the affairs of their country?"

"Oh, that's a great bid for masculine approbation, isn't it?" laughed Mary. "The silly

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things! And how the men must laugh at them, though they tell them what good, good girls they are. Theirs is the smuggest assumption of proper womanly subjection to a superior creation that I ever heard of. It ought to 'fetch' him."

"And the men, the Anti-Suffrage Society men also, that are working desperately to quell the unwomanly uprising?" I pressed.

Mary did not answer this directly.

"Unfortunate that the name of that important and august body should lend itself to the abbreviation it does," commented she, her eyes twinkling. "It is known far and wide as the great A. S. S., isn't it?"

I laughed.

"I am beginning to think you don't need much help, Mary. You will be equal to meeting the arguments of the other side, on the spur of the moment, with your own effective reasonings. But what are you going to say when they maintain that women should have no part in law-making when they are not fitted to administer the law; that there is danger that they might embroil the nation in war though they never could be soldiers?" This seemed rather a poor argument, even to myself, as the soldiers of the King's regular army are deliberately disfranchised—but I advanced it for what it was worth.

"I will remind them that the very figure of Justice is a woman, that our greatest and wisest

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ruler was Victoria the Good—and what of Joan of Arc, who led an army? To be sure the men of former days had a simple directness of procedure with unusual women. The fair Maid of Orleans was ultimately burnt at the stake, wasn't she? If the men of to-day might only take the leaders among the suffragists and burn 'em as witches, how it would simplify matters!"

"They will tell you that a queen takes counsel of her ministers, that in reality it is they who guide the ship of state."

"Still, with the ruler remains the supreme power to veto or approve a measure. And it seems to me that if a woman was admittedly worthy of governing a great nation like ours—with the highest wisdom and a thorough grasp of public affairs—if while doing this she could be a perfect wife and mother, a model to all her subjects in dignity, true womanliness and domestic virtues, it is possible that an intelligent interest in public affairs, the responsibility and privilege of a voice in the conduct of our administration, need not unsex us nor break up the home. And for that matter, the counsel of wise and experienced men will always carry due weight with our sex and we will continue to look to them for guidance. It is the nature of woman. And now let us have tea and stop thinking about the old debate. If such arguments as you have been bringing forward are amongst the oppo-

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sition's reasonings against equal suffrage, our side should be able to hold its own."

"There is just one other thing I would suggest, Mary," remarked I, as I poured tea. "Sometimes a taking anecdote or a bright little story as illustration carries an audience. If you could tell them an applicable story—"

"So I can. I have the very thing!" laughed she. "I heard it before I could talk, and doubtless most of my listeners will be quite familiar with some version of the well-known nursery tale. You remember it goes this way:

"Once a man was driving a pig home from market. They came to a bridge, and do what he could, the pig would not go over it. So he went back to seek help. He came to a dog, and said, "Dog, dog, bite pig, pig won't go over the bridge, and I can't get home to-night." But the dog said, "The pig never did me any harm; I won't bite him." Then he went on further and came to a stick, and said, "Stick, stick, beat dog, dog won't bite pig, pig won't go over the bridge, and I can't get home to-night." But the stick said, "No, I've nothing against the dog; I won't help you." Then he came to a fire, and said, "Fire, fire, burn stick, stick won't beat dog, dog won't bite pig, pig won't go over the bridge, and I can't get home to-night." Then he came to a puddle of water, and he said, "Water, water, quench fire, fire won't burn stick," and so on." (I won't give my readers the repetitions every

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time. Mary gave them fully, and it is most effective, I admit.) “‘Then he came to a bull which he asked to drink the water up, then to a butcher whom he asked to kill the bull because it wouldn’t, then to a rope which he commanded to hang the butcher for refusing to do this, then to a rat that he begged to gnaw the rope. But none of them would help him. At last he came to a little woman, and at his wits’ end asked her, “Can you tell me what to do? Rat won’t gnaw rope, rope won’t hang butcher, butcher won’t kill bull, bull won’t drink water, water won’t quench fire, fire won’t burn stick, stick won’t beat dog, dog won’t bite pig, pig won’t go over the bridge, and I can’t get home to-night.” The little woman thought a moment, then she said, “I am very poor, but give me a penny and I think I can find a way to help you.” So he gave her a penny and she went and bought a saucer of milk for her cat, and said to pussy, “See that rat? Now promise me to try to catch it after you drink this.” The cat said, “Very well, I will.” So when the cat had finished the milk she made one spring at the rat. The rat in terror ran to the rope and began at once to gnaw it. And so it was all along the line. Then the cat to the rat, the rat to the rope, the rope to the butcher, the butcher to the bull, the bull to the water, the water to the fire, the fire to the stick, the stick to the dog, the dog to the pig,

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the pig to the bridge, and over it he jumped!—and so the man got home that night.’”

“And I suppose the penny signifies the vote, in possession of which she put her wits to work and was enabled to help straighten things out—though without that to work with she could have done little,” said I, amusedly.

“Oh, of course. And now I must be going myself if I want to get home to-night.”

They tell me that Mary took the fancy of the audience, and that her varied arguments were instrumental in winning the debate for her side. But I don't know. She did wear that sweetly pretty hat—and the way she has of looking at people when she wants to persuade them is very appealing.

